

2010 Syrah

Santa Barbara County



Winemaker
Adam Tolmach



Blend: 94% Syrah & 6% Grenache
Vineyards: 41% Sebastiano Vineyard, 15% Bien Nacido, 14% White Hawk, 24% Roll Ranch and 6% Grenache from Sebastiano.
AVA: Santa Barbara County
Alcohol: 13.5%
Vinification: 20% New French Oak
Barrel Aging: 17 Months
Case Production: 818



Winemaker's Notes

This wine marks a rather dramatic shift in what we think syrah from California can be. For years now we have been working on fine tuning the balance of our syrahs, striving for a fresher, livelier, more friendly and drinkable style. We have shifted from using vineyard sources in warm areas to ones located closer to the coast—they produce wines that are more expressive and peppery. And, although I have never willfully chosen to pick stupidly over-ripe grapes, over time it has become apparent that harvesting at lower sugar levels than we have in the past allows us to better capture the essence of syrah. The maturation of syrah grapes follows a change in flavor profile from vegetal and green to spirit-y and peppery to fruity and simple to prune-y and flabby. Catching the ripeness at that magical spot that combines fruit with spice is my goal.

The dramatically cool summer of 2010 taught us that what once seemed like under ripeness really gave us a much more expressive and savory profile to our syrah. In that very cool year the syrah struggled to achieve even modest sugar levels before the vines went into dormancy. The lower ripeness at harvest gave us a wine of 13.5% alcohol, a full point less than past efforts, but it truly made a superior wine.

The 2010 is clearly cool climate dominated with 62% of the grapes coming from extremely cool vineyard sources. The vineyards in this blend are 41% John Sebastiano Vineyard (a great new vineyard located on the eastern edge of the Santa Rita Hills appellation), 15% Bien Nacido, 14% White Hawk, 24% Roll Ranch and 6% grenache from John Sebastiano.

Winery



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