

# 2013 SYRAH

## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

905 CASES PRODUCED

It might seem like old news that we have another syrah ready, since we've been making it since 1983. However craft is all about progress and change, and we like being crafty! The 2013 is the culmination of many small changes over the years, but in some ways it seems entirely new and exciting!!

We produced our first syrah in 1983, at the time there were very few plantings in California but I was intrigued by the French original grown in the northern Rhone Valley. Our wines gained in richness and heft in the 90's and 00's to the point that even the Santa Barbara County bottling really needed a minimum of 5 years before it could be drunk. I slowly began to realize that here in California we could get all the intensity and richness we desired because the climate is so benign—what we were missing was finesse.

You may recall the Robert Mondavi family was clobbered in the 90's by famous wine critic Robert Parker for espousing the same thing, but times change. I can't say much about the Mondavi wines since cabernet is not my thing, but I can tell you why we are so thrilled by this new emphasis. Over the years my attention has focused on various aspects of syrah but now more than ever I realize it's all about the pepper: Syrah is inherently spicy, and that's what makes it such a food friendly wine. Its distinctive character is lost as the grapes become over-ripe, so our winemaking has evolved to better catch the pepper—sweetness is nice but savory is even better! We think this 2013 has it all: precocious deliciousness, concentration and spice.

When tasting this syrah one finds effusive aromas of spicy pepperiness mixed with a lively cranberry/cherry character. The flavors are intense without being heavy and there is a delicious savory/fruitiness that plays off the wonderfully soft textured tannins.

Translation: Forget Shiraz, think new wave Saint-Joseph. This wine rocks! And it's delicious to drink today.

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**BLEND** 95% Syrah & 5% Grenache

**VINEYARDS** 34% Bien Nacido, 24% Roll Ranch, 17% Zotovitch, 15% White Hawk, 5% John Sebastiano, 5% John Sebastiano Grenache

**LOCATION** Santa Barbara County

**ALCOHOL** 13.5%

**VINIFICATION** 10% New French Oak

**BARREL AGING** 13 Months

**TOTAL PRODUCTION** 905 Cases

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