

2014 SYRAH (Special Bottling)

SOLOMON HILLS SANTA MARIA VALLEY

The cool and foggy Solomon Hills vineyard is appropriately planted to chardonnay and pinot noir, except for a tiny block of syrah the Miller family planted as a cool-climate threshold experiment in the mid-2000s. I've felt fortunate to be the only vintner that has played with this fruit, which has captivated me from bottling to bottling since our first in 2008—this syrah is always gorgeous stuff!

Being in such an ocean-influenced locale, at the western edge of the Santa Maria Valley appellation, this little half-acre planting of Estrella clone syrah shows a radically different expression than the same clone at Roll Ranch in toasty upper Ojai. Here the grape shows all of its untamed and savory potential, which endured even in a warm vintage like 2014, thanks to the ever-present moderating influence of the Pacific.

This 2014 has the layers of a Russian doll: outermost are powerful woody aromas of smoky cedar and fresh fir, then minty olives, then cigar box, and then earthy cocoa as the wine implodes toward its core of peppered dark cherries. That sense of restless flux and tension is present as ever from this site, while the extra smidge of whole-clusters lent some herbal pucker to this otherwise sleek and finely textured syrah.

For real Northern Rhone geeks, I might say have at it now it takes me back to some bottles of Jamet I had when I first discovered the northern Rhone. But really I'd recommend a bit of time for this beauty—the pretty streaks of greenery will persist, but will also mellow out and allow more spicy and resinous complexities to join the fray.

BLEND 100% Syrah
VINEYARDS Solomon Hills
LOCATION Santa Maria Valley
ALCOHOL 13.5%
VINIFICATION 100% Neutral French Oak
BARREL AGING 19 Months
TOTAL PRODUCTION 118 Cases

PRESS REVIEWS

Jeb Dunnuck

"Seeing a lot more whole cluster than normal, the 2014 Syrah Solomon Hills offers serious amounts of black olive, pepper herbs, and darker fruits, with an undeniable herbal edge, medium to full-bodied richness and a good finish. Adam compared this to Jamet, and I agree, but it really pushes on the herbal edge.." - Jeb Dunnuck 92 Points

Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"The 2014 Syrah Solomon Hills Special Bottling is one of the many highlights in this range. Intensely floral and savory, it floats on the palate with superb aromatic and flavor intensity. The 2014 was done with only 20-25% whole clusters, but the overall impression is of a wine with considerable stem influence. This is in an especially bold, pungent style with a lot of varietal character. The 2014 is intense, but not at all tannic. I loved it." - Antonio Galloni 96 Points

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