

2014 SYRAH

WHITE HAWK

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

White Hawk vineyard is planted on hillsides of pure sand in Cat Canyon near Los Alamos, California. The Syrah vines struggle to survive, since sand can hold neither nutrients nor water well. The production is absurdly low, making them some of our most expensive grapes. The wine that's made from this spot is as unique as the vineyard looks. There is an intense but lovely red berry fruit character followed by an intriguing seaweed-iodine spiciness--this aromatic association perhaps because the soil here is an ancient seabed. In any case, it's quite unique. The tannins are copious, but super fine textured. The climate is just cool enough that we never have to worry about the acidity level of the grapes, there is always a zesty tang that keeps this wine lively.

This wine has been one of the more interesting studies in how harvest sugar levels affect the wine's character. At this vineyard there's been an evolution over the years of harvest sugars from moderately ripe to quite ripe and then back. It's a vineyard that always has a lot to say, it's got a big personality!

I know that in Paso Robles it's standard operating procedure to wait for the grapes to raisin to 29 brix (% sugar) and then harvest, but I never went off the deep end like that, though 2003-2007 the grapes came in at the 25-26 brix range producing wines with alcohols around 15.5%. The wines have aged fabulously, and, although they are not sweet, they have a jammy sweetness that's enjoyable on a cold winter night.

However, I began to realize I much prefer wines that finish savory and have sharp definition, and those early White Hawks that were picked in the 23 brix range in 2000 to 2002 are just that way. So, in the last few years we have gone back to picking in that range and have preferred their spicy character, subtlety and finesse.

BLEND 100% Syrah

VINEYARDS White Hawk

AVA Santa Barbara County

ALCOHOL 13.5%

VINIFICATION Open top fermentation with 15% whole clusters

BARREL AGING 20 Months in 20% New French Oak

TOTAL PRODUCTION 382 Cases

PRESS REVIEWS

Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"One of the standouts today, the 2014 Syrah White Hawk Vineyard is an explosive wine of serious intensity. Dark cherry, plum, leather, spice, menthol and licorice provide considerable aromatic savoriness, but today, the 2014 is seriously tannic and forbidding. This is a wine for readers who can be patient." - AG 95 Points

Jeb Dunnuck

"The 2014 Syrah White Hawk is a stunner. Currants, lavender, decaying flowers, and hints of peppery herbs give way to a rounded, beautifully textured, sexy Syrah that still has building tannin and a great finish." - JD 95 points

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