



APPELLATION: SONOMA COAST
VARIETAL BLEND: 100% SYRAH
WINEMAKER: SPENCER GRAHAM
RELEASE DATE: EARLY SPRING 2009

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Deep purple in color. Aromas of Damson plum, graphite, black cherry cobbler, white pepper and a hint of spice. On the palate, this wine is generously textured, full in body, with a mid palate showcasing supple tannins that support bright vivacious blackberry fruit and a crackling acidity that hints at the wine's longevity. The finish is long and clean, with flavors of rich, ripe late-summer red and black fruits, accompanied by hints of tobacco.

WINEMAKING

In every vineyard there are small sections or blocks which produce fruit that is a cut above for reasons which can range from better soil to more advantageous sun exposure. In these sections, we allowed our fruit to ripen a bit longer than the rest of the vineyard. We found that the vines in these optimal sections continued to increase in complexity without sacrificing natural acidity and tannins. Once harvested, this Block Nine fruit was hand-sorted and fermented in small lots with 40% whole clusters. Temperatures were kept cool at the beginning of the fermentation and then allowed to rise naturally in the traditional Rhone fashion. The freshly pressed juice, containing the skins, seeds and stems of the grape, known as "must," was punched down by hand every day in order to gently extract more flavor and tannin. After fermentation, the free run wine was kept separate from the hard press and was aged in neutral French oak barrels for 16 months. The wine was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered in its natural state.

VINEYARDS

Our Block Nine Syrah grapes are sourced from a vineyard located just north of San Pablo Bay on Lakeville Highway outside of Petaluma in southern Sonoma County. Cooling influences from the nearby bay converge with those from the Pacific coast to create a particularly cool mesoclimate which allows for a stellar expression of the variety.

VINTAGE

The 2006 growing season in northern California was characterized by two distinct features: a spring with more rain than usual and a slightly cooler than normal summer. As a result, the grapes had an ideally paced development cycle with even ripening throughout. A lighter than average crop load allowed the vines to bring each of the clusters to optimum maturity. As a result, this Syrah is a true expression of the variety, featuring clean, pure flavors, ample structure and body, and balancing natural acidity.

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