



2006 DIERBERG VINEYARD SYRAH SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

VINTAGE NOTES

Our vineyard, located at the far eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley, is both the warmest and the highest elevation vineyard in the appellation. Backing up to the lower slopes of the San Rafael Mountains which loom high above the ranch, Star Lane Vineyard features a unique range of weathered sand, gravel and alluvial cobbles over a clay/loam subsoil. We chose the coldest and windiest portion of our vineyard as the home for our limited plantings of Syrah, feeling that this more extreme microclimate would help focus and refine the rich flavors we generally expect from the ranch. The upper portion the Syrah block, planted to clone 838 on IOI-14 rootings has a lighter textured soil—largely sandy loam—with a moderate amount of golf ball-sized stones. The lower portion, planted to clone 877 also on IOI-14 rootings, stretches down towards the creek bed and offers a more weathered gravel profile. Both areas are very well drained. The Syrah is managed without the use of chemical herbicides and only small amounts of sulfur and copper are used for mildew and botrytis control. Both products are certified organic.

VINEYARD NOTES

Average rainfall followed by warm temperatures in late winter caused a very early bud burst in Santa Barbara County—up to 14 days early in some cases. Mid-spring rains, however, slowed things down and had our vineyard manager on his toes about potential disease pressure. Bloom lasted almost two weeks in parts of the vineyard and set was, consequently, erratic. Summer passed with mild temperatures punctuated by our usual two to three day heat spells. Conditions during veraison were favorably warm and consistent. After a slight crop adjustment

towards the end of veraison, the vines at Star Lane produced an only slightly below average crop load of intense but very balanced fruit.

WINEMAKING NOTES

Each fermentor is filled with hand sorted, destemmed and only lightly crushed fruit. In 2006, 40% whole clusters were retained to help emphasize the more savory flavors that our vineyard tends to produce. A three day cold soak was followed by a moderately warm fermentation with native yeast only. At the end of active fermentation, the must was heated to 95°Fahrenheit for three days to extract every last bit of color, flavor and phenolic material that the grapes had to offer. Free run wine was moved to barrel “dirty,” meaning that much of the fermentation lees were kept in contact with the wine and an uninoculated malolactic fermentation finished in July following harvest. After 22 months in 2 year old demi-muids (158 gallon barrels) and a light fining with 4 fresh egg whites per demi-muid, the 2006 Dierberg Syrah was bottled unfiltered.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2006 Dierberg Syrah is a dense, backwards and brooding wine. Aromas of grilled meat, blackberry, blueberry, smoke, wild sage brush and classic Southern Rhône garrigue are complemented by similar, very rich flavors. On the palate, the wine is startling with its yin & yang combination of silkiness and an iron-like grip. Still, it retains a sense of grace and sophistication that is uncommon in Californian Syrah. Flattering now, the wine should reach peak maturity in 5 to 7 years and will age gracefully well into its second decade.

Composition: 100% Syrah

Appellation: Santa Ynez Valley

Alcohol: 14.7 %

pH: 3.90

Total Acid: 5.1 g/L

DIERBERG

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