



Vineyard: Grapes came from our 6-acre block located on the east Dry Creek Bench where chalky, rocky soil provides excellent drainage. The vines are a Durell-clone Syrah (small, olive-like berries) field grafted onto 5C rootstock. Vines are cane pruned and vertical trellised for greater sun exposure. The vineyard was planted in 1991.

Vintage/Harvest: 1998 was a cool growing season in Dry Creek. We harvested our Syrah October 7th, a month later than the previous year. There was a physiological ripeness (mature flavors of blackberry and smoked meat) to the grapes I had yet to find in any previous vintage from this vineyard. This tends to occur in cool vintages because grapes have a longer hang time while maintaining appropriate sugar and acid balance. The grapes were picked at an ideal sugar of 24.5 brix.

Vinification/Oak Aging: The Syrah was destemmed and crushed into closed top stainless steel tanks. After a 2 day cold soak the must was inoculated with Syrah yeast (are we suckers for marketing or what). Each Syrah lot was pumped over twice daily during a 9-day fermentation. The wine was then pressed into a tank and transferred to our winery, which required us to rack the Syrah 3 more times before barrel aging. By virtue of these logistics, we discovered that aeration could help eliminate any off-odors commonly found in freshly fermented Syrah. We then aged this wine for 11 months in exclusively French oak barrels, 30% new. Th'98 Syrah was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

Style/Description: The '98 Syrah is the best wine we have made in our short history as a winery or as home winemakers. The concentration of blueberry/blackberry fruit seems to compliment our typical smoked meat character nicely. The savage nature of this wine reminds me of Cornas (Northern Rhone) in a ripe vintage. It was bottled unfinned and unfiltered. We recommend drinking it within the next 3 to 5 years.

Harvested: 10/7/98
Oak Aging: 11months, French, 30% new
Total acidity: 0.63g/100ml, pH 3.72
Alcohol: 14.4%

Bottled: 9/20/99, Unfinned, unfiltered
Cases: 1673
Blend: 100% Syrah
Retail: \$20.00

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