



VARIETAL & VINEYARD: This wine is 100% Syrah from our 6 ½ acre benchland vineyard located in the Dry Creek Valley. The chalky, rocky soil provides excellent drainage that moderates the vine's vigor.

VINTAGE: The year 2000 brought a quirky growing season with early heat waves followed by cooler than normal weather. Harvest conditions were typical -- sunny, warm days with cool and foggy mornings-- enabling us to push the ripeness envelope. We picked the grapes super-ripe on September 20 and 21 at sugars ranging from 25.5 to 26 degree brix. By then the skins were soft and seeds were brown. We've learned that picking Syrah at this stage of physiological ripeness results in added aromatics and flavors. Waiting until the seeds are brown allows us to aggressively aerate the fermenting must without gaining astringent tannins that might otherwise occur with green seeds.

WINEMAKING: The grapes were cold soaked for 5 days in closed top stainless steel tanks before fermentation. The wine was aggressively aerated during fermentation with pump-overs being done twice daily through a sump and screen. We also used the occasional *delestages*, which is French for "drain and return". The wine was aged in French Oak (including several 92 gallon barrels), one third new, for 14 months. This 100% Syrah was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

STYLE/DESCRIPTION: Our most flamboyant and therefore my favorite Syrah to date. Seems like we make this claim every year doesn't it? A floral aroma is followed by intense sweet blackberry, coffee and smoked meat notes. This full-bodied Syrah has excellent depth and richness. The wine will age for 7 to 10 years, though it won't make it that long in my house.

Harvested: 9/20/00 & 9/21/00
Total acidity: .59 gm/100ml
pH: 3.80
Oak aging: 14 months, French barrels and puncheons, 30% new

Blend: 100% Syrah
Alcohol: 14.5%
Bottled: 11/10/01
Cases Produced: 1,845