



VARIETAL & VINEYARD: This Southern Rhone-style wine is 75% Grenache, 13% Syrah and 12% Mourvedre from our new vineyards planted in 1998. The primary component of this blend comes from a 2.9 acre block, planted to three clones of Grenache Noir. We obtained the bud-wood from Tablas Creek and Alban Vineyards. These clones, selected from Chateauneuf du Pape, give darker color and better structure than the majority of Grenache planted in California. The Syrah used in this blend comes from Northern Rhone clones 174 and 877 while the Mourvedre (bud-wood also from Tablas Creek) comes from three rows planted alongside our Grenache. Our vines are planted on low-vigor rootstock to 4'x 6' spacing.

VINTAGE/HARVEST: The 2002 vintage was a great one for us. A moderate summer was followed by a made-to-order September that featured warm and sunny days with very cool evenings. This allowed us to go for the gusto and pick our grapes at very high sugars, or as the French would say, *surmaturite*, which is when Grenache develops its most interesting flavors. We harvested our Grenache October 2nd and 12th at an average of 27-degree brix. In an attempt to achieve Chateauneuf-like results, we routinely drop 50 to 60% of the crop, limiting the yield to 7 pounds per vine. Our Mourvedre was full-bodied enough to make it into this year's blend.

VINIFICATION: The wine was fermented in 4-ton open-top tanks. We drained a portion of the juice, a method commonly used in the Rhone called *saignée*, to intensify color and structure. The wine was racked only once to preserve fruitiness. As is done in Chateauneuf du Pape, we blended Syrah and Mourvedre for color, body and complexity. This wine is bottled unfined and unfiltered after 11 months in older, neutral French oak.

STYLE/DESCRIPTION: I am proud to say this is one of the few California Rhone-style blends that will have you thinking of the Vaucluse (Southern Rhone). It has intense raspberry, tar, pepper and smoked meat (thank you Mourvedre) flavors with a sexy texture. Is this my favorite Unti wine? What do you think?

Mick

Harvested: 10/2/02, 10/12/02 and 10/16/02
Total acidity: .58 gm/100ml
pH: 3.65
Aging: 11 months in neutral French oak

Blend: 75% Grenache, 13% Syrah, 12% Mourvedre
Alcohol: 14.4%
Bottled: 9/8/03
Cases Produced: 645 cases