



VARIETAL & VINEYARD: This Southern Rhone-style Syrah comes from both our benchland vineyard and our recently planted vines located on the winery property. While the 6-acre benchland block has been the mainstay of our Syrah program through 2001, the new vineyards feature the much heralded Northern Rhone clones 174, 877, 383 and 470. All of our vineyards are located in the Dry Creek Valley.

VINTAGE: We've already extolled the virtues of the 2002 vintage in our previously released wine. Harvest conditions were typically ideal -- sunny, warm days with cool and foggy mornings -- enabling us to push the ripeness envelope. We picked the grapes super-ripe on September 24 through September 27, 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.

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 new plantings of Syrah really add another layer of aromatics and flavor to this wine. We also blended 5% Grenache (first time ever at Unti) to boost up the fruit. The wine was aged in French Oak (including several 92 gallon mini-puncheon barrels), 35% new, for 14 months. This 100% Syrah was bottled unfined and unfiltered.

STYLE/DESCRIPTION: This is clearly the most complex and concentrated Syrah we've ever made, which makes sense given the additional vineyard sources. It is darker, juicier and more aromatic than any previous vintage. You'll recognize the classic Unti blackberry/smoked meat character, here, with this 2002, it is accented nicely by violets, lavender and raspberry liqueur. This full-bodied Syrah has excellent depth, richness and balance. The wine will age for 7 to 10 years, though it won't make it that long in my house.

Harvested: 9/24 through 9/27/02
Total acidity: 0.61g/100ml
pH: 3.75
Oak aging: 14 months; French barrels and puncheons, 30% new

Blend: 95% Syrah, 5% Grenache Noir
Alcohol: 14.8%
Bottled: 11/11/03
Cases Produced: 993