



VARIETAL & VINEYARD: This Syrah comes from a tiny section within our 6-acre vineyard located on the eastside Dry Creek Bench. The vines on this little knoll are much less vigorous, due to the well-drained soils, and as such produce smaller grapes with more concentrated flavors and tannins than the balance of the Syrah vineyard. Our typical yield in this section is less than six pounds per vine.

VINTAGE: The 2003 vintage was a great one for us. A moderate summer was followed by a made-to-order September with warm dry days and very cool evenings. This enabled us to let the grapes hang for optimum flavor development. We picked the grapes super-ripe on September 21 through September 24, at sugars ranging from 25.5 to 26.5 degree brix. By then the skins were soft and seeds were brown, the tannins were ripe *and* the acids were holding. It is the best vintage for Syrah in our short history.

WINEMAKING: The grapes were cold soaked for 5 days in closed and open-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. Once in barrel, we routinely stir lees for added texture and complexity. Our Benchland Syrah showed so well early on, that we decided to rack this wine only once during its time in barrel. We aged this wine in 40% new French Oak for 14 months. This 100% Syrah was bottled unfined and unfiltered.

STYLE/DESCRIPTION: This is clearly our most complex and concentrated Syrah we've ever made. It is darker, juicier and more aromatic than any previous vintage. You'll recognize the classic Unti blackberry/smoked meat character along with violets, lavender, pepper, blueberries and toasty oak. It is the most Northern Rhone-like we have ever made. This full-bodied Syrah has excellent depth, richness and balance. The wine will age for 7 to 10 years.

Mick

Harvested: 9/21 through 9/24/02
Total acidity: 0.57g/100ml
pH: 3.90
Oak aging: 14 mos. French Oak barrels, 40% new

Blend: 100% Syrah
Alcohol: 14.6%
Bottled: 12/6/04
Cases Produced: 410
