



VARIETAL & VINEYARD: This Southern Rhône-style wine is 77% Grenache, 17% Syrah and 6% Mourvedre from our creekside 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 Rhône clones (174, 877, 383 and 470) 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: Heavy rains in March were followed by a moderate to cool growing season, especially during harvest. The late growing season forced us to patiently wait until the grapes were very ripe, or as the French would say, *surmaturite*, which is when Grenache develops its most interesting flavors. We harvested the grapes at an average of 26.5 to 27-degree brix October 20th through October 23rd. We normally drop 50 to 60% of the crop, limiting the yield to 7 pounds per vine. This concentrates flavors and helps to achieve full ripeness.

VINIFICATION: Upon crushing into small, open-top tanks, we drain a portion of the juice (10 to 15%), a method commonly used in the Rhône called *saignée*, to intensify color and structure. After a five day cold-soak, the fermentation begins spontaneously with indigenous yeast. The open-top tanks allow us to work the must by punching down each tank twice daily. As is done in Chateauneuf-du-Pape, we blend Syrah and Mourvedre for color, body and complexity. Thirty percent of this wine was fermented using whole clusters. Retaining the stems helped provide bright fruit and pepper aromas. We aged this wine in 620 gallon foudres, which are commonly used in the Rhône. These large barrels preserve the vineyard character by minimizing both oak extraction and oxidation. It is bottled **unfined** and **unfiltered**.

STYLE/DESCRIPTION: If our 2005 Grenache resembles a Chateauneuf du Pape, this 2006 is more like a Gigondas – meaning it has higher tone fruit and pepper with bright acidity. It has intense aromatics of raspberry, blackberry, tar, pepper, licorice, and dried herbs. Though more fruit forward than the 2005, this Grenache has the stuff to last at least 3 to five years, but should really start showing well in two years. We really love making this wine.

Mick

Harvested: 10/20/06 through 10/23/06

Total acidity: 0.59g/100ml

pH: 3.76

Aging: 13 months 620 gal French oak foudres

Blend: 77% Grenache, 17% Syrah, 6% Mourvedre

Alcohol: 14.9%

Bottled: 12/6/07

Cases Produced: 990