

JOE'S PICKS



2013 Sonoma County grenache

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Growing: The Sonoma County grenache was sourced from our Big River Ranch located in the Russian River Valley AVA. It is a

combination of three different grenache clones from two of the most famous collections, Tablas Creek and Alban. These clones have produced a wonderful wine with vibrant red fruit characteristics of strawberries and cherries. The vineyard is on a benchland overlooking the Russian River, which produces a cooling effect on the vines allowing slower ripening and creating a delicious balance and depth of flavors.

Winemaking: We used a combination of open and closed top tanks in order to benefit from the favorable characteristics they provide. The closed top allows for an extended maceration and increased complexity while the open top produces a wine with fresh, concentrated fruit flavors. Later, the two wines are combined. A portion of both tanks are bled off and used to start our rose. This creates a wine of incredible intensity and depth. We use the Clos yeast, special from Spain, because it works remarkably well with the grenache.

Blending: The wine is a combination of 95% grenache and 5% syrah. Syrah is an excellent addition to grenache; it adds color, tannins and a complex, savory note. The grenache is a wine that is beautifully fresh, with lovely nuances that compliments food wonderfully. It is a wine that is reminiscent of something you would find in the south of France - ripe, delicious and sun-kissed.



2013 Maple Vineyard zinfandel

Growing: The Maple Vineyard is one of the most famous and iconic zinfandel vineyards located in the Dry Creek Valley. The old vines are head trained and dry farmed producing intensely flavored small berries annually. They are located on a benchland with a unique soil profile that shows no sign of slowing or decline. Tina Maple is an exceptional steward of the land, treating the vines with the utmost care and celebrating the quality of the soil and location.

Winemaking: The grapes were hand sorted, destemmed and then placed in closed top tanks. They were pumped over twice daily and allowed to remain in contact with the skins for approximately 12 days. Pressing of the wine is determined by mouthfeel. When we have achieved a delicious silky, velvety texture, along with a balanced tannin structure, we press off using our small (and extremely gentle) basket press.

Blending: The Maple zinfandel is a combination of the Annie and Boo's blocks. These two legendary blocks sit right next to each other but have slightly differing soil profiles that produce grapes with subtle differences. The blending of the two creates a more complex and interesting wine with mouth-filling layers of fruit and silky tannins.



2012 Big River Ranch syrah

Growing: The Big River Ranch is unique with the Russian River flowing around it creating a peninsula. The river acts as a cooling current slowing the ripening of the grapes and allowing for wonderful long hang time. Allowing the grapes to ripen over an extended, slow period produces grapes that are extremely intense and flavorful. We use a combination of clones; the syrah noir and Estrella clones add to the complexity and nuance of the wine. The syrah noir adds dark fruits and the Estrella adds a smooth structure and backbone.

Winemaking: We used a closed top tank for the syrah which allows for an extended maceration over 25 days. Twice daily 45-minute pumpovers for the first 10 days was just the right amount of time

for a gentle extraction of intense flavors and silky tannins. The wine was pressed off into barrel (mainly French) with 20% new oak. It was aged in the cave for 14 months to produce an exceptional wine.

Blending: For the 2012 vintage, we were blessed with some outstanding fruit. We added 20% grenache which adds a wonderful brightness and lift to the wine. It blends extremely well with the darker plum and blueberry flavors of the syrah. This is a wonderful food wine the will age beautifully for many years to come.



2012 Hillside cuvée

Growing: The 2012 vintage was a remarkable vintage and was truly exciting in the abundance of high quality fruit we received. We sourced fruit for the cuvée from multiple vineyards located in the Dry Creek and Russian River Valleys, including our own Big River and our friends down the road at Florence Vineyard. The wonderful growing conditions in 2012 allowed us to pick at optimum ripeness, insuring a plethora of blending options.

Winemaking: For the cuvée, our winemaking protocol was twice daily pumpovers, extended macerations, gentle pressing with our basket press and aging in primarily French oak barrels.

Blending: This is where the fun begins. As a winemaker, I love to put blends together. I enjoy how the different grape varieties add different layers of flavors and structure - the sum being greater than the parts. The zinfandel adds flavors of blackberries and black cherries. The petite sirah adds a deep, dark color and wonderful tannins. The petit verdot, an underused varietal in my opinion, brings a deep, dark plum component. The carignan adds acidity that brightens and makes for the wine lively. Last, but not least, is the syrah. That year, in and out, is proving to be a wonderful addition to the blend; it has a way of bringing everything together. The wine is delicious now and will continue to age for several years to come.



Bella
VINEYARDS & WINE CAVES