



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCES: 41% Watch Hill, Los Alamos Valley; 30% Harrison Clarke and 29% Carhartt Vineyards, Santa Ynez Valley. This mid-temperature climate zone, ranging from a warm Region II to a cool Region III, is ideal for cultivating rich, intense Syrah fruit with prominent dark fruit components such as plum and blackberry.

VINTAGE: Harvest 2003 was one of Santa Barbara County's warmest vintages on record and one of our earliest harvests ever. The growing season began with unseasonably warm winter temperatures that triggered budbreak in late January, nearly a month ahead of normal. Rain, wind and cool weather experienced during the May bloom period caused poor fruit set in some clusters and lightened yields. Summer temperatures were above average, giving Syrah the heat units necessary to fully ripen with ideal flavor, skin and seed development.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: After many years of working with the remarkably diverse Syrah grape, I have found that a fusion of Australian and French winemaking techniques brings out the best expression of this grape. The goal is to maximize extraction prior to the midpoint of fermentation to preserve the unique fruit character and avoid the possibility of harsh tannins. The grapes were crushed into tanks and given a 4 to 5 day cold soak. During this time, a saignée was drawn off to further enhance concentration. During the most active days of fermentation, we performed 'rack and returns' for additional extraction. The wine aged nine months in 60-gallon French oak barrels with 30% new oak in the mix.

This Syrah is superbly extracted with a rich, dense texture and elegant tannins. Aromas of blackberry, cherry and plum mingle with hints of red licorice, vanilla and cinnamon spice. A subtle undercurrent of French oak complements the complex fruit character on the palate. The wine culminates in a long, opulent finish.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.06 g/l

pH: 3.76

Alcohol: 14.5%

Sugg. Retail Price: \$30.00

Production: 441 cases