



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCES: 50% Watch Hill, Los Alamos Valley; 31% Harrison Clarke, Santa Ynez Valley; and 19% Ampelos Vineyard, Santa Rita Hills. This wine features grapes from three of Santa Barbara County's finest Syrah vineyards located in Region I and Region II climate zones. Cool climate Syrahs from this appellation are known for their rich and elegant tannins and distinctive white pepper and dark plum fruit components.

VINTAGE: The 2004 growing season was slightly warmer than normal, resulting in excellent conditions to fully ripen cool climate Syrah grapes and create wines of great richness and concentration. Above average spring temperatures triggered an early budbreak, setting the stage for an early harvest. Cool conditions prevailed for most of the summer until a heat spell lasting more than a week arrived in September. The warm temperatures helped push the Syrah grapes to perfect maturity with fully developed flavors, skins and seeds.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: After many years of working with the remarkably diverse Syrah grape, I have found that an adaptation of Australian 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 was pressed immediately at the conclusion of fermentation, then aged 15 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 gentle tannins. Aromas of dark plum and blackberry mingle with hints of white and black pepper, smoked meat and a faint mineral component. Lightly toasted French oak nicely complements the intensity of the fruit on the palate. The wine culminates in a long, opulent finish.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 5.81 g/l

pH: 3.62

Alcohol: 14.5%

Sugg. Retail Price: \$28.00

Production: 357 cases