



VINEYARD SOURCES: *100% Watch Hill Vineyard (Los Alamos Valley).* Planted in 2002, Watch Hill Vineyard is a relatively cool site, located between Santa Maria and Buellton in the Los Alamos Valley of Santa Barbara County. The property consists of about 22 acres of Syrah vines planted to the newest and best Syrah clones and rootstocks. The soils are a mix of sand and clay low in nutrients, which helps keep the cluster size small and contributes to the striking dark color and rich concentration of the resulting wines.

VINTAGE: The 2009 vintage began with cool temperatures in spring and early summer, but by late August, a series of warm days arrived, jumpstarting the harvest earlier than expected. Warm days alternated with cooler days, a pattern that allowed the grapes to fully develop with ideal color and character. After two years of exceptionally low crop yields, this year's harvest was back to more normal levels. For the third year in a row, rainfall totals were below average, which helped control vine vigor, producing superb concentration and flavors in the grapes. Grapes from the Watch Hill vineyard were harvested on October 21.

WINEMAKING: This Syrah was crafted using an adaptation of Australian winemaking techniques. Focusing on extraction early in the fermentation process brings out the best expression of the grape and minimizes the risk of harsh tannins. The grapes were crushed into tanks and given a four day cold soak. A saignée was immediately 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, and then aged 18 months in 60-gallon French oak barrels with 40% new oak in the mix.

TASTING NOTES: Reminiscent of wines from the northern Rhône, this Syrah beautifully displays the finesse and intensity typical of Watch Hill fruit. Rich aromas of dark plum and blackberry are complemented by hints of anise and pink peppercorn. The wine's lush mouthfeel fills the palate and is gracefully supported by a rich structure. Moderately full tannins combined with a lively thread of acidity make the wine very approachable, and the plush texture and layers of complexity will only be enhanced with additional time in the cellar.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.3 g/l

pH: 3.65

Alcohol: 14.8%

Production: 72 cases