



VINEYARD SOURCE: 100% *Watch Hill Vineyard (Los Alamos Valley)*. 98% Syrah, 2% *Viognier*. 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: Mother Nature set the stage for a challenging vintage in 2011 with a hard freeze in January and frost in April, causing damage to the buds and green tissue in certain vineyards. Spring and summer brought below average temperatures, which resulted in a long, cool growing season. This, combined with lower crop yields, fostered excellent development of depth and complexity in the fruit. A light rain event in early October was followed by warm, sunny days that gave the grapes the push they needed to reach full maturity. Grapes from Watch Hill were harvested on November 2.

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, 'rack and returns' were performed for additional extraction. The Syrah was pressed immediately at the conclusion of fermentation, and aged for 15 months in French oak barrels with 42% new oak in the mix. The wine was bottled in March 6, 2013.

TASTING NOTES: Reminiscent of wines from the northern Rhône, this Syrah beautifully displays the sophistication and intensity typical of Watch Hill fruit. Very complex aromas of dark plum, black currant and blackberry are complemented by hints of pink peppercorn and violets. Explosive flavors of dense blackberry, plum and a touch of anise are supported by a creamy mid-palate and the right balance of moderate tannins and natural acidity. While very approachable upon release, this wine will deepen in complexity and richness with additional time in the cellar.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 5.7 g/l

pH: 3.69

Alcohol: 14.6%

Production: 121 cases