



2018 ZACA MESA VINEYARD SYRAH

Appellation	Santa Ynez Valley
T.A.	6.6 g/l
pH	3.86
Alcohol	14.8%
Production	113 cases

VINEYARDS

100% Zaca Mesa Vineyard

Zaca Mesa Vineyard is the birthplace of Santa Barbara County Syrah thanks to the vision of a young winemaker, Ken Brown. As Zaca Mesa's first winemaker, Ken planted the Estrella Selection of Syrah in 1978 in what became known as the "Black Bear" block. The Estrella selection has uniquely adapted to Zaca Mesa's terroir over the past 44 years, and is in the process of becoming a Heritage Clone by the U.C. Davis Foundation Plant Services Program. In the meantime, cuttings from the Black Bear block were used to plant Mesa Block A, which is the source for this wine. The vines are situated on a 1,400-foot mesa above the fog line, perfect for developing rich character and intensity.

VINTAGE

The 2018 vintage was our latest harvest since 2012. Late rains in March were well-timed and budbreak occurred about two weeks later than recent averages. Temperatures throughout the spring and summer remained cool, ideal for retaining natural acidity in the grapes. Canopies were healthy and well positioned to go the distance to ripen the fruit. Berries were small, and yields were customarily low, resulting in excellent concentration and intensity in the fruit. Grapes from Zaca Mesa Vineyard were harvested on October 20, 2018.

WINEMAKING

This Syrah was crafted using an adaptation of Australian winemaking techniques focused on extraction early in the fermentation process, minimizing the risk of harsh tannins. The grapes were crushed into tanks and given a four-day cold soak. At the conclusion of fermentation, the lots were pressed immediately and aged for 21 months in French oak barrels with 20% new oak in the mix. The wine was bottled on August 20, 2020.

TASTING NOTES

This wine represents a return to Ken's roots as the founding winemaker of Zaca Mesa Winery in 1977. This Syrah—grown on cuttings from the block Ken planted in 1978—boasts aromas of black raspberry and black plum highlighted by hints of bay leaf, anise and cracked pepper. Luscious flavors of cassis, blackberry jam and a hint of sage are supported by rich tannins and a smooth, lingering finish. The superb texture and complex profile will only be enhanced with additional time in the cellar.