



2005 Novy Judge Family Vineyard Grenache

We do not believe that higher sugars necessarily equate to riper grapes. Sometimes grapes can be ripe at low sugar levels and sometimes they can be under-ripe at exceptionally high sugar levels. This holds true for Pinot Noir, Syrah, Chardonnay, and even Zinfandel. One exception, however, may be Grenache, which seems to need higher sugars to truly be ripe. Getting this sugar in Grenache in the already cool Judge Family Vineyard in Bennett Valley especially during the long, cool 2005 growing season was no easy task. We made multiple thinning passes in the vineyard and even went so far as to apply a KDL Spray (a potassium based spray) to help accelerate maturity. The result was one of our latest harvests ever (November 3) at fairly modest sugar levels (24.1 brix—imagine what it would have been without our intervention). This long hang time did produce rather ripe stems and thus we were able to utilize some whole cluster fermentation on this wine. We also experimented with blending some Judge Vineyard Syrah into the Grenache and ultimately discovered that the best blend was 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah.

Finally, we chose to only utilize older oak barrels in this wine thus allowing its true colors to shine thru unvarnished.

This may be our most serious Grenache-based wine yet. Though it does exhibit the rich fruit character that defines Grenache, it buffers these flavors with a more meaty, earthen complexity, as well as a noticeably tannic backbone. This wine starts to shine with some aeration (even 6 or more hours) so we suspect that it will be even better with another few years in the bottle.

91 points *Wine Spectator*

234 cases produced

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