



2007 Novy Judge Family Vineyard Grenache

The Judge Family Vineyard in Bennett Valley is a very cool location for Syrah, much less for Grenache. Grenache likes to be really ripe, both in sugar and flavors, before it truly tastes ripe. In previous vintages we let the Grenache hang and hang and then hang some more, achieving sugar levels approaching 30 brix. However, in 2007's superb growing season, we noticed that the Grenache started tasting ripe at lower sugar levels than in previous years. Perhaps this was because we were able to let a bit more crop hang on the vines in 2007 (due to the outstanding weather) and this extra fruit (still less than 3 tons per acre) slowed down the sugar accumulation.

We picked the Grenache between 24.8 and 25.3 brix (with the slight difference due to a slightly different section) on October 14, 2007. We used a small amount of whole clusters in the wine (20-30% depending on the fermentor) and we also co-fermented some of the Grenache with Syrah from the Judge Vineyard. We aged the wine in 22% new French oak for 16 months, and ultimately selected a blend of barrels that was about 20% Syrah. This blend, along with the whole cluster fermentation, produced a Grenache that is quite different stylistically from our previous efforts. It is a more "serious" wine that changes significantly with some aeration. It begins with loads of red fruit and seems tight and a bit simple on the pallet. As the wine opens up it turns darker flavored, with more earthy, mineral, and meaty notes. Although labeled as Grenache this wine comes closer to a Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape blend than our previous efforts with the grape. We'd certainly recommend some time in the cellar for this wine, or several hours of breathing time. Then enjoy it with a big hunk of meat!

210 cases produced

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