

T O R

TOR ROCK Syrah Rock Judge Vineyard, 2006

Blend: 100% Judge Vineyard Syrah

Production: 200 cases

Release date: Summer 2008

Vintage

The 2006 vintage was a cool vintage for the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. Bud break happened a little earlier than 'normal' and the wet ground from all the rain from the winter allowed for the vines to set a healthy crop. This good set of fruit allowed for us to thin the vineyards back through multiple fruit dropping passes to the crop level that we desired. This season was marked more by what did not happen as opposed to what did happen. It was a very even, cool, steady growing season without any significant heat spikes or rains other than a bit of rain in the first week of October. The Syrahs from 2006 are some of the biggest/darkest wines we have ever made and as delicious as they are now they should only improve with bottle age.

Vineyard

The Judge Vineyard is located in the cool sub appellation called Bennett Valley which is in Sonoma County just South of Santa Rosa. This area receives some of the coolest breezes from the Pacific ocean and retains its fog/marine layer longer than almost anywhere else in Northern California. This cool climate allows for extremely long hang times and a very different flavor profile than our Hudson Syrah bottlings. Planted to Syrah clone 877, this site provides fruit that emphasizes the cooler climate flavors of cracked black pepper/earth and smoke. Almost always our last pick of the year, Bennett Valley is an area which is just now gaining recognition for the extraordinary Rhone varietal wines that it is producing. We thin this site to 1 cluster per shoot in order to ensure that in this cool climate to gain the extra level of concentration and ripeness.

Winemaking

Great Syrah for us is the most labor intensive wine we make, the fruit has to be hand sorted multiple times to remove dehydrated berries. Some are 100% whole cluster fermentations; this means we ferment with clusters of grapes still on their stems that require very labor-intensive small lot fermentations. Other Syrahs are fermented using de-stemmed fruit. In part what determines the different fermentation styles is if the seeds are sweet and the stems brown, is it closer to whole cluster where if the stems are still green when the fruit is brought in we will usually de-stem the clusters. After fermentation, the wine is pressed direct to small French Burgundy barrels. Our Syrahs are then aged with little racking for 21 months before being bottled unfiltered and unfinned.

The Wine

Cracked black pepper fresh out of a pepper mill is the most defining quality on the aromatics of this wine. Road tar, roasted meats and charcoal smoke are also found on the nose of this Syrah. On the palate there is full weight with tremendous density and length across the entire palate. Along with the richness and density are the acids from the cool climate vineyard site that hold the fruit in check and provide precision and definition. Ripe cherry, boysenberry and even hints of Provence herbs are evident on the palate. A classic cool climate California Syrah. More like Hermitage to the Hommage Allans' Cote Rotie.



"Possesses aromas and flavors of espresso roast, grilled meats, black fruits, spice, and earth."

Rated 92-94 by
Robert Parker, Jr.,
"The Wine Advocate."