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TOR ROCK Grenache

Cuvée Cooper, 2013

Blend: 75% Grenache, Terra Bella Vineyard; 25% Syrah

Production: 250 cases

Release date: Summer 2015

Vintage

It is rare, and I look back now on 38 harvests, to have two vintages like 2012 and 2013 next to each other. Both would qualify in Bordeaux terms as vintages of the century. Both started early, had long and relatively even growing seasons, both had average to above average (depending on site) crop levels. Both gave us or most of us the opportunity when to pick when we wanted, which meant levels of ripeness was up to us. Ripeness is subjective in winemaking, but to us very specific. Think of that perfect peach at the farmers market. The grower made sure the tree was not over cropped, sustainably farmed, and that each peach had the opportunity to get sweet and ripe. Ripe meant the fruit was still firm, has good acid and tooth aching sweetness. Like that farmer, we chose to pick the moment just after the seeds lose their greenness and just before the clusters start to soften and lose their magic. It is a small window, and in 2013 we found it again and again. Peachy keen.

Vineyards

The Terra Bella Vineyard, located in western Paso Robles, is within sight of the Pacific Ocean, which creates a more moderate climate than found with vineyards further inland. This climate is ideal for red Rhone varietals like Grenache and Syrah, producing wines with very low pH, good acidity and excellent sugars. The result is rich wines with great varietal characteristics, depth, and balance. The soils are riddled with limestone which restricts growth, sets a smaller crop, and makes for some of the most uniquely distinctive Grenache wines in the world, certainly in California.

Winemaking

The 2013 Cuvée Cooper is yet another great example of why I love CA Grenache - power and elegance in the same wine. This 2013 vintage, like the 2012, was completely destemmed and fermented with its own wild yeast in a single open top fermenter using a combination of punch downs and pump overs. The 2013 Grenache shows a bit more black fruit and power than the 2012 did - but is clearly and deliciously still Grenache. Once again we bottled this unfiltered and unfiltered.

Winemaker's Tasting Notes

The nose on the 2013 Cooper incorporates black raspberries and spice along with the lite earth profile that we have had every year. On the palate this is medium/full weight with more black fruits, dried herbs, pepper and a long lingering finish. I use less new French oak on this wine than any we make, simply because a great Grenache is all about the fruit, unadorned exotic, and immediately appealing Grenache fruit.