

T O R

TOR ROCK Syrah

Judge Family Vineyards, Hommage Allan, 2006

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 very healthy crop (not as much as the bumper crop of 2005 but still quite healthy). 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. 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. 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. For this wine we determined during blending that a small addition of Viognier created a wine unlike any we had made before. This addition of Viognier is actually a classic French model from Cote Rotie and make a more floral and focused wine and not quite as anamalistic. The Viognier provides yet another layer of flavors and makes this wine stand apart from the rest of the Syrahs from 2006.

The Wine

On the nose this shows the inclusion of Viognier through the very lifted aromatics. Honeysuckle, mint, wet earth. On the palate it is medium weight with an immediate impression of the same floral elements on the nose. Blackberry honey, sea spray, white pepper and ginger. Very much in the vein of Cote Rotie with an additional level of ripeness from the warmth of the late 2006 vintage.



"Aromas of charcoal, asphalt, pepper, roasted meats, and blackberries emerge from this firmly structured, medium to full bodied, backward 2006."

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

"Ruby red. Blackberry, violet, licorice and stone on the nose. Densley packed but quite tight and firm-edged, with spice and medicinal flavors dominating today. Finishes with building tannins."

Rated 90 by *"Stephen Tanzer's Internation Wine Cellar"*