

Davis Family Vineyards

2003 Syrah, Russian River Valley

Hey – Syrah – Hoorah!! I have been waiting, anticipating this day when I would get to release a Syrah under the Davis Family Vineyards label. I planted two acres of Syrah in two separate one-acre blocks on my property seven years ago and have been carefully tending and training those vines to someday be in the class with the other grapes from this same plot of land.

I sold the grapes to other wineries as I waited for the vines to reach a level of maturity to match the wine quality of our Pinot Noir and other wines. In 2002, I kept some of the fruit for myself and began experimenting with different fermentation techniques to zero-in the methods that would best highlight the character of the Syrah from this individual site. The results were delicious...so in 2003 I pruned the yields of the vineyard back to be very low, concentrating the flavors to their maximum – I waited until the last week of October to harvest the grapes at their peak of ripeness – and put into play the best of my instincts and knowledge of this grape – and in your box is our first release of Davis Family Vineyards Syrah from the magical 2003 vintage!

Some wine historians say Syrah is the oldest varietal ever vinified into wine...dating back to ancient civilization in the land now known as Syria. It is hard to document such a claim but one thing is for sure – Syrah is produced in as many corners of the globe today as is any other varietal! Syrah will do well in many different climates, yet make a different wine in each. From Washington State to the Shiraz (the same grape...a rose by any other name...) from Australia. I fell in love with Syrah by drinking the wines of France's Rhone Valley. Even in that area the wines can vary widely – the Southern Rhone, *Chateauneuf de Pape*, produces a very rustic, meaty wine in many vintages while areas in the Northern Rhone like Hermitage, or Cote Rotie produce wines with a little more elegance yet still rich in color and flavor, all the way to Syrah based Cote du Rhone which is often blended with Grenache and makes an often lighter fruity table wine. The wines from my vineyards are what I call "Cool Climate Syrah" The coastal influence of the Russian River Valley gives the grapes a long "hang time" on the vine which manifests a multitude of flavor chains, leading to very complex, multi-layered wines – coupled with the consistent, warm California sunshine results in something both bold and beautiful. Look at the color of this wine – it's darker and denser than any varietal we craft.

Thru trial I have adopted winemaking techniques from the Cote Rotie region in the Northern Rhone -- adding a very small percentage of the Viognier grape to the Syrah, right at the crusher, which adds intensity and perfume to the already complex aromas -- once in the mouth the flavors are explosive – rich and very full bodied, but as it pushes your palate to the edge with its size, it retreats at just the right moment to display the depth and range of its flavors, -- ripe blackberries with hints of white and black pepper and smoky sun-baked herbs – then gets persistent again with a mouthcoating finish that stays with you forever. – (Can you tell I like this wine?) It is almost as mysterious as Pinot Noir yet far more masculine, like Cabernet – but not at all like either in aroma or flavor – an animal unto itself – which may explain why it has stood the test of time- from the ancient times of Mesopotamia thru the Roman Empire, the rule of Napoleon, and now the New World darlings like Australia and Russian River Valley. I think if you know Syrah you will love this one and if it is a new grape to you this may be the beginning of a wonderful new affinity/affair! **Hey – Syrah --Hoorah!!...Enjoy!**

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