

Davis Family Vineyards

2005 Barn D'Or

It's Always More Fun When the Barn D'Or is Open!...just like the back label reads! I started this brand to be fun – a fun blend, at a friendly price, and very fun to drink! The blend of Cabernet and Syrah has been around for years, Australia's top wine, Penfold's Grange, and throughout the South of France, and has always been something I played with in the cellar every year.

Under the Davis Family label, the wines are always a single varietal, we create blends of those wines from the different areas of our vineyard to achieve the perfect balance and complexity of that varietal in that given year, from our site. However, the blending that goes on for this Barn D'Or is very different – I do not use Syrah to make the Cabernet better, or visa versa. As I do my blending trials on this wine, I am trying to create something that is unique to itself. As you would imagine, I am striving to create something where the sum of the parts is better and more interesting than the pieces it is made from.

But also that creates a one of a kind experience, a fun wine experience that may remind you of something you have tasted, yet that can not be put in a specific category. I want this wine each vintage, to be a discovery of a new set of aromas and textures and flavors. Blending is an art that I approach as though I am sneaking up on a trophy, like hunting or searching for a four leaf clover.

The lots I use for this wine are barrels of Syrah and Cabernet that have not been used in the Final blend of our Davis Family wines, not flawed in any way, just the few barrels that take away from what I see as the perfect balance or bulls-eye of those varietal wines. The treatment in vineyard and winery have been exactly the same as our top tier wines.

Once I have put those single varietal blends together, I assess my notes of trial blends I have been playing with throughout the year, compare it too exactly how many barrels I have of each of the lots and begin the search...for that perfect combination. First tasting each barrel and making specific notes on each – then with a 100ml graduated cylinder, using knowledge of how these may combine, I begin trying combinations to see how things marry together – looking for the magical spot where it is not just a variation of the Cabernet or Syrah but where it surfaces with its own personality.

Usually 30 or 40 variations that some times differ by only one percent, - keep in mind that of the Cabernet there may be 20 barrels, from different areas of the vineyard, each in a different barrel, i.e. different Coopers, or age of the oak, or the toast level etc.; and the same for the Syrah. The possibilities are endless, because the goal is not to use them all in the blend but to make the best wine... the barrels that do not make this final Barn D'Or blend are sold to other wineries, at a fairly high price because again, the wines are very good, just more of a particular character than I want, like new oak for instance, or black fruit that overshadows the red fruit I like to highlight, any note that may throw off what I think is the best final blend.

There is a moment during this "hunt" where the blend surfaces – viola! Then I make that exact blend again, and small variations to either aspect of it – retaste it several times in that comparative set, with my son Cole our cellar master, and agree we have discovered that fun and unique wine. We then recreate the blend in a few bottles, as if it is the final blend and let it sit – then we retaste it every week as it has had a chance to marry in the bottle, often then making tiny shifts and repeating the process until we like it every time we open a bottle. At that point we do the calculations, extend the percentages of our formula to the gallons in each of the barrels, create the blend and prepare it for bottling.

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