

Davis Family Vineyards

2005 Syrah, Russian River Valley, Guyzer Block

Syrah has an interesting tale to tell...it is believed to be the first grape ever vinified into wine, dating back to ancient times in the land now known as Syria. Syrah is exotic and mysterious like Pinot Noir yet far more masculine, like Cabernet – but not at all like either in aroma or flavor.

This vineyard is named the Guyzer Block, as a play on the word Geyser, the natural erupting hot springs here in Sonoma County, and the nickname I have had since I was a kid; this vineyard is at our home in Russian River Valley. I planted 2 acres of Syrah on his steep, hillside vineyard in the mid-nineties to follow my love of the cool climate expression of this grape. The vineyard is a northeast facing hillside so there is nice morning sun but no harsh afternoon heat – coupled with our coastal influence that is funneled to us via the Russian River, the grapes end up being on the vine for about 200 days each season (this 2005 vintage was harvested on Halloween and November 3rd) this long “hang-time” means time for the grape to build more interesting flavors for us to unlock in the winery,...it all equates to amazing richness and many layers of flavor.

I add a small amount of Viognier grapes at the crusher, an old-world tradition of the Cote Rotie region in France’s Northern Rhone Valley – an area that captured my heart many years ago, and have tried and borrowed many techniques from as well. The interaction of the two grapes in the fermenter boosts the aromatics and depth of character of the Syrah even more.

Coincidentally, the February issue of Wine and Spirits Magazine is titled “Worlds Greatest Syrah” and this 2005 you just received is awarded accolades of 90 points in that issue and called out as one of California best! When one of the editors called to get some details about the wine she went on about the complexity of the wine saying “there was amazing Micro and Macro to the wine, if you just pay attention to the primary aromas and flavors they are so lush and forward, but then with closer attention all the nuances of the black and white pepper, thyme and the violets plus all the range of fruits keep showing up in the glass” – they liked the wine – I do too – but most of all I hope you do too!

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