

2003 SYRAH "ROASTED SLOPE VINEYARD"



Andrew Murray Vineyards is Santa Barbara County's only estate hillside-vineyard dedicated exclusively to Rhone varieties. This narrow focus, combined with rocky, well-drained soils, and a very cool microclimate especially well suited for growing great Syrah, make for a fantastic setting in which to craft world class wines, possessing immense richness, maturity, and drinkability. This focus is further defined and refined by our "minimalistic handling" approach to winemaking. All of our wines are hand-picked and "hand-sorted" in the vineyard with an eye for only picking the best fruit. The 2003 vintage started slowly, and then lasted forever due to the cool weather that typified this year. The sun did, however, come out in full force at the end of season and the Syrah grapes were able to reach a great level of maturity. We were able to harvest an average of 1.3 tons/acre of Syrah from the "Roasted Slope Vineyard". The small-berried grapes were hand harvested in the cool, foggy mornings during late October and early November from a single and very unique vineyard block, named the "Roasted Slope" Vineyard, after the direct translation of the famed vineyard in France, "Cote Rotie". It is in this vineyard that French growers are allowed and encouraged to grow Viognier (up to 15%) amongst their Syrah vines. They then harvest the two grapes together and ferment them together (called co-fermentation). We use this same "co-fermentation" procedure to make our "Roasted Slope Vineyard" Syrah. It would be easier to simply blend a little Viognier with Syrah after fermentation, but the blending of flavors is never quite complete. One can almost-always taste the Viognier separately from the Syrah, rather than their combined flavor, when fermented separately. The Viognier acts to elevate the nose of the Syrah with notes of candied violets, while also softening the palate, and lengthening the finish. We feel that we accomplished just this with our "Roasted Slope Vineyard" wine. The harvest was gently crushed and destemmed and moved into open-top tanks. Following a two day cold-soak, the must spontaneously started fermenting with the native yeasts. Fermentation and extended maceration lasted 10-21 days with the cap being punched down into the fermenting must three to four times daily. Upon completion of the maceration, the new wine was transferred into small French oak barriques, where it aged for 20 months.

WINE FACTS

Composition: 96% Syrah , 4% Viognier

Appellation: Santa Ynez Valley

Soil: Well-drained, gravelly, rocky, sandy-loam

Aspect: North facing slope to 30°

Elevation: 1200 - 1500 feet

Fermentation: Open Top, Punch Down

Aged 20 months in French Oak, 25% New

700 cases produced

Release Date: August 2005

Alcohol: 14.5% pH: 3.75 TA: 6.5 g/L

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

" *"Roasted Slope", is the direct translation of Cote-Rotie, where Syrah and Viognier grow in vineyards harmoniously, and where the two grapes bring each other up to the next higher level of quality. It is with this inspiration from Cote-Rotie, that we release this single vineyard wine from our estate. The nose of this wine displays the desired characteristics of black cherries, violets, and a touch of toasty oak that all follow through into the palate. The tannins are full but lush, and the finish is long and lingering. This wine is surely enjoyable now, but it shall age gracefully for years to come. "*