



A N D R E W
M U R R A Y
V I N E Y A R D S

WINE CLUB SPRING 2018

A LOVE LETTER TO SYRAH



Though it was a chance sip of Viognier that started me down the path of my wine life, Syrah has always been the most important variety for me. I cut my teeth on Syrah in the Northern Rhone, what a lucky place to start. In Cote Rotie, I marveled at Syrah's ability to be very savory (black olive, pepper, dried meats) while also being delicate, floral and fruity (higher acid red fruits like raspberry and tart cherry). I tasted in disbelief as smaller producers struggled for relevance and quality, while larger growers like Guigal seemed to always make some of the most highly scoring wines each and every vintage. I tasted how French Oak and toast level could sometimes enhance the smoky bacon character of Syrah, while other times it covered up the variety all together. Heading south, I came to appreciate the bigger and richer style of Syrah coming out of Hermitage. I fell in love with Hermitage La Chapelle from Jaboulet, though I can barely even afford or justify the high prices now. Crozes Hermitage is the appellation with lesser terroir that snakes itself all around Hermitage. I learned to appreciate these for having a bit less complexity and often a bit more rustic qualities. The wines of Graillet jump out at me as a benchmark example of Crozes. Across the river, there is Saint Joseph, also more affordable and often very fun to drink. I appreciate the wines of Gonon quite a bit for their funky whole cluster earthy notes that are balanced by crunchy red fruits and decidedly un-refined tannins. As Saint Joseph ends, the crazy and complex hills and microclimates of Cornas come into view. Here, there is only one variety. Here, Syrah is king! With its more southern location and windswept granitic hillsides, Syrah struggles to exist. Here may be the truest expression of Syrah on the planet. Syrah from Cornas can sometimes fool you into thinking it's from Cote Rotie, with notes of lilac and white flowers, before it punches you in the chest with the unmistakable rustic tannins and funk that typifies Cornas. Cornas is a decidedly moderate climate, a lot like the Santa Ynez Valley. It is certainly warmer than Cote Rotie, but not nearly as warm as further south in the Southern Rhone or in Languedoc, where Syrah starts to take on over-ripe qualities, not unlike a hot vintage from east Paso Robles. I was never able to intern in France, so my most important abroad experience came from a yearlong "stage" near the Margaret River area of West Australia. I was so naive when I applied and accepted the opportunity that I never thought for a moment that the region may not specialize in Syrah. It turns out that much of lower WA is very cool, and a near perfect climate for Burgundian varieties. So, I went there for Syrah, but I mostly worked with Chardonnay and Riesling, and some inland valley Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Interestingly enough, the winery made a style of Syrah that more closely resembled the Central Coast of California more than South Australia, which is famous for their boozy, sweeter fruit forward styled Shiraz. Of course, I would not know this for years, until I started making my own versions of Syrah. I attended UC Davis to finish growing up (still haven't finished growing up) and to learn the science behind winemaking. While this was a pivotal period in my life, I was disappointed that they never really taught us how to make wine. It turns out winemaking is very intuitive and learned over time. It is learned by drinking and exploring and tasting and comparing and traveling and doing. Don't get me wrong, it is great to have the double BS in Viticulture and Oenology when a vintage throws us a curve ball. But, I have always appreciated the art more than the science, the subtlety more than the obvious. So, this long preamble is really just a love letter to Syrah, and all of its styles. It is why I geek out on trying to find new sources (Slide Hill Vineyard released last club shipment), it is why I keep tweaking and fine tuning the Curtis Estate that we now farm. From these tweaks came our first Estate Grown Syrah since 2005. I love Syrah co-fermented with Viognier, like our Watch Hill and Roasted Slope. I love Syrah with more whole cluster inclusion for its dark brooding qualities, like our Alisos. Though I constantly strive for balance, I do like a bit of toasty French oak in some Syrah, like our new Estate, that helps to moderate the fruit notes from our slightly warmer estate location. So, yes, we do craft a lot of different Syrah bottlings each year. But, we think they are wonderfully unique and special, each with a different story to tell, each with a slightly different inspiration. I hope that you can sense and taste this passion for Syrah in every single sip!

2016 SYRAH WATCH HILL - 94 Points !



The first critical reviews of our 2016 vintage wines are just starting to come in, and we have some great news to report. Our 2016 Syrah Watch Hill was just awarded 94 Points by Robert Parker, the second highest rated Syrah from Santa Barbara County. We know this does not change the quality or the taste of this wine, but I hope you all understand that we work tirelessly for even the smallest of improvements and we think we are crafting some of our best wines ever!

FEATURED WINES

2017 GRENACHE BLANC, CURTIS

Fermented and aged in stainless steel results in an extremely fresh, fruity, and dry white wine...

2016 GRENACHE, CURTIS VYD.

We are going from strength to strength with our Estate Grenache, rich, dark, balanced...

2016 ROASTED SLOPE

This is the wine that literally put AMV on the map, Syrah co-fermented with Viognier...

2015 SYRAH ESTATE GROWN

We have not released an Estate Syrah in over a decade... we are thrilled with this new effort...



WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON.



FEATURED WINES

2017 GRENACHE BLANC, CURTIS VINEYARD

Grenache Blanc has certainly gained in popularity in the Santa Ynez Valley over the last few years. Crazy enough, it has been the 5th most widely planted white grape in France since the 1980's. Still, there are relatively few GB's bottled all on their own. Rather, it is a blender because the variety adds aromatic lift, minerality, and zesty acidity to white blends from Chateauneuf-du-Pape. We chose to ferment and age the wine entirely in stainless steel and to inhibit malolactic fermentation, to shine a magnifying glass on the potential of the variety. We are in love with the end result and are so excited to share this wine with you. The wine is stunningly aromatic with peach, melon, and white flowers. The palate is rich and the finish is long, only interrupted by some balanced acidity. Enjoy over the next few years.

350 cases produced \$25/btl

2016 GRENACHE, CURTIS VINEYARD

Our Grenache vines require more care and attention than our other varieties, because Grenache loves to set larger yields of rather large clusters. During several vineyard passes over the spring and summer, we will remove shoots and entire clusters. Later, when the vines start changing color (veraison), we will go through at least one more time in order to trim the individual clusters down to a smaller size that will ensure a more even ripening of more concentrated grapes. We think that this extra work shows in our Grenache. This year the wine is medium dark garnet in color, with aromas and flavors of mocha, vanilla, tar, and baking spices on the spice side, that are balanced by notes of ripe strawberry, rhubarb, and orange rind on the fruit side. While highly drinkable now, this wine will be so much better in a year. Drink now through 2025.

400 cases produced \$36/btl

2016 ROASTED SLOPE

As so many of you know, our original Viognier vineyard turned out to be Syrah, with just a bit of Viognier mixed in. Rather than replant the vineyard, we decided to go with it and started co-fermenting the Viognier in with the Syrah, just like they do in Cote-Rôtie. We have making this wine in the same style since 1996. The wine is not labeled with a variety, but it is about 92% Syrah with the balance being Viognier. The wine is impossibly dark and concentrated. The notes in this wine are amazingly complex; black cherry, toasty oak, crispy bacon, candied violets and white flowers. Decidedly "New World" and intense in style, the Roasted Slope is crazy rich and mouth-filling with a finish that never quits. Drink this stunning red wine over the next 2-15 years.

500 cases produced \$50/btl

2015 SYRAH, ESTATE GROWN - 93 POINTS!**

We have not released an Estate Syrah since the 2005 vintage, the year we moved on from our old estate. I have been dreaming and scheming to release an Estate Syrah ever since. When we moved onto the Curtis property a few years back, the first thing I did was to graft a weaker block of Viognier to two of my favorite clones of Syrah...383 and 471. Both clones are known to yield smaller berries and looser clusters of impossibly dark fruit. Of course the grafting was a gamble, like everything else in farming. Luckily this "new block" was wonderful right out of the gate... the perfect confluence of intuition, place, and luck. We immediately recognized the potential from this block at harvest and during fermentation. We very closely followed several lots through the entire aging cycle in nearly 50% new French Oak. We ultimately chose just 8 barrels as the best Syrah that we could bottle from the Estate. We were immediately rewarded with high praise from some very picky critics. We are incredibly pleased with this debut effort. We bottled this last May, so the extra year of bottle age has yielded a wine that is remarkably ready to drink, while still being able to age for a decade or more.

Limited production \$65/btl **Only included in select shipments.



LET US ENTERTAIN YOU!



To make a Reservation for any of our Upcoming Events, or to inquire about any of our new Visitor Experiences available at our Winery & Visitors Center, please call the winery at 805-686-9604 or send us an email at Visit@AndrewMurrayVineyards.com.

We look forward to making your next visit with us delicious, informative, and of course, fun.

CURRENT RELEASES - LIMITED

2017 ESPÉRANCE ROSÉ - 91 POINTS!

Retail Price: \$22.00/bottle
Wine Club: \$17.60/bottle

2015 ESPÉRANCE - 91 POINTS!

Retail Price: \$30.00/bottle
Wine Club: \$24.00/bottle

2016 SYRAH WATCH HILL - 94 POINTS!

Retail Price: \$50.00/bottle
Wine Club: \$40.00/bottle

2015 MOURVÈDRE - 93 POINTS!

Retail Price: \$36.00/bottle
Wine Club: \$28.80/bottle

2015 SYRAH, ALISOS VYD - 92 POINTS!

Retail Price: \$45.00/bottle
Wine Club: \$36.00/bottle