



Zio Tony Ranch Syrah Russian River Valley 2008

Vineyard Character

In the year 2000 George Martinelli planted this Syrah vineyard on his great-uncle Tony's old apple ranch. The plants are on a vertical trellis system and are made up of clones 877, 174, 470, and 383. Syrah vines have the inherent longing to grow very aggressively, creating jungle, jungle, jungle. Despite the galloping meaty flavors of Syrah, it is even more finicky than Pinot Noir, as it is very susceptible to soil deficiencies and dehydration during hot spells. George tries everything he can with the Syrah to "shrink its head", in order to make it believe that it is a Pinot Noir vine instead. A year long effort goes into a constant arm wrestling match against the plant's relentless vigor, with canopy management, pruning, suckering, thinning, dropping crop, and regulating moisture content in the soil by planting a crop cover of red clover.

The grapes are picked between 25 and 27 degrees brix to ensure mature ripe fruit flavors. After picking, the whole berries undergo a long cool fermentation to generate skin contact and expose fruit character, being fermented with wild yeast. The juice is transferred into oak barrels with a touch of residual sugar remaining to complete the fermentation process in barrel until dry. It rests in 90% new French oak on its gross lees for one year. This wine is neither heat nor cold stabilized and is un-fined and unfiltered.

Case Production: 372

Tasting Notes

The 2008 Zio Tony Ranch Syrah has aromas of blackberries, currants and bacon. Flavors include dried blueberries, saffras, juicy blackcurrants and licorice.

Historical Acclaim

2007 Vintage

- 92 points Josh Raynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar

2006 Vintage

- 92 points Josh Raynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
- 92+ points Robert M Parker Jr. The Wine Advocate
- 93 points The Wine Spectator

Winemaker: Bryan Kvamme

Consulting Winemaker: Helen Turley