



Zio Tony Ranch Syrah **Russian River Valley** **2011**

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 yearlong 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, fermenting 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. The finished wine is un-fined, un-filtered, neither cold nor heat stabilized and contains naturally occurring sediment.

Case Production: 189

Tasting Notes

The 2011 Zio Tony Ranch is a classic Syrah with a multi-layered nose of flint, olive tapenade, peppercorn, and violets. The palate delivers rosemary, smoked meat, and spiced plum. Decant 60 – 90 minutes. Drink 2014 – 2026.

Historical Acclaim

2009 Vintage

- 94 points Antonio Galloni, The Wine Advocate
- 92(+) points Josh Raynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
- 91 points James Laube, The Wine Spectator

Winemaker: Bryan Kvamme

Consulting Winemaker: Erin Green