



**Zio Tony Ranch “Gianna Marie” Syrah  
Russian River Valley  
2013**

### **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.

### **Growing Year**

The 2013 growing year was the second dry year in a row for us. We had an especially dry spring and it warmed up early, so the vines got an early jump on the season. Bloom came along in early May and the temperatures were perfect for berry pollination. The clusters ended up setting an abundance of berries. We had to do quite a bit of cluster thinning to maintain our desired crop levels and to get some sunlight and air movement into the canopy. Harvest came early as well. Fortunately, we had cooler temps about midway through, which slowed down picking and allowed us to catch up on things - including sleep! Harvest was complete after 7-8 weeks.

### **Wine Statistics**

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: 120

### **Tasting Notes**

The 2013 Zio Tony Ranch Syrah shows a nose of violets, figs, dates and ambrosia of black fruits. The palate reveals flavors of black currants, blueberries and a touch of Earl Grey tea with youthful tannins.

### **Historical Acclaim**

2012 Vintage

- 94 points Antonio Galloni, Vinous

**Winemaker:** Bryan Kvamme

**Consulting Winemaker:** Erin Green