

Casaeda

2010 Sonoma Valley Syrah

Statistics

Blend: 100% Syrah

60% Syrah, Russian River Valley, Sonoma

20% Syrah, Sonoma Valley, Sawi Vineyard

20% Syrah, Napa Valley, Alexander Vineyard

Vineyards

The 2010 Casaeda Sonoma Valley Syrah grapes were grown in three outstanding cool climate Syrah vineyards, primarily in Russian River, Sonoma Valley, with a bit from Napa Valley. Syrah grown in cooler regions will show the full varietal character of Syrah with all the attributes we think of in wines from the Rhone.

The Russian River Vineyard is in a very cool area near the town of Graton. The vines are some of the oldest Syrah vines in California at over 25 years of age, and are grown in Goldridge soils, prized for the sandy loam texture with great drainage. Pinot Noir growers covet this soil for outstanding vine balance. The clones used in this old vineyard are not recorded.

The Sawi Syrah grapes are from a vineyard planted by David Sawi, located high (1450 feet) on top of the George Ranch, due west of the city of Sonoma. The vineyard lies on an east facing ridge top of rocky soils and was planted in 2000 to the Cote Rotie selection of Syrah on 1103P rootstock. Given the altitude, the temperatures at Sawi Vineyard are very cool and it is very windy. It is typically one of the last vineyards to be picked every year. The winds and the rocky, hillside soils hold back the growth of the normally vigorous Syrah vines, and contribute to the small berry size and concentrated flavors. The Cote Rotie selection produces small vines and small, very loose clusters in this hillside vineyard.

The third vineyard is in Napa Valley, a cool area of an otherwise warmer valley. This vineyard is planted entirely to the Syrah Noir selection on 3309 rootstock in a sandy loam soil, which helps to devigorate the vines. The vineyard is in the southern end of the Valley, near Soda Canyon, and so cooler than other areas of Napa Valley.

The 2010 vintage was tough in terms of weather....very cool both during the growing season and harvest. The crop size was smaller than normal, with both smaller berries and smaller clusters. Harvest was much later than normal with pick dates pushed into mid and late October. Although the wines turned out beautifully, it was a nail biting year because of the late harvest.

Winemaking and Tasting Notes

The 2010 Casaeda Syrah was crushed into open top fermentors, leaving a small amount of whole berries, and left to cold soak for 4 days. The must was fermented with mostly native yeast, completing fermentation in 8 days. The wine was pressed at dryness, barreled immediately, and aged for 16 months in 17% new French oak and older French oak barrels. The Russian River Syrah has the classic characteristics of a varietal Syrah. The wine is rich, and lively with acidity with a lingering finish of velvety tannins, characteristic of the site, the clone and the vintage. The Sawi Syrah is very much in a cool climate style with plenty of peppery and spice aromatics and a liberal amount of acidity in the palate. The Napa Valley Syrah is full of mid palate tannins, blueberry aromas and is deeply colored.

The 2010 Casaeda Syrah is a wine which is ready to drink on release, and tastes well with a variety of cuisine, especially foods with plenty of spice, heat and aromatics. The wine will also age well for the next few years. 232 cases were bottled in February 2012.

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