

Casaeda

2011 Sonoma Valley Syrah

Statistics

Blend: 100% Syrah
85% Syrah, Russian River Valley, Sonoma
13% Syrah, Napa Valley, Cortese Vineyard
2% Syrah, Sonoma Valley, Sawi Vineyard
13.8% alcohol, 5.6g/L TA, 3.66 pH

Vineyards

The 2011 Casaeda Sonoma Valley Syrah grapes were grown in three outstanding cool climate Syrah regions of Sonoma and Napa, primarily in cooler Russian River 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 and seldom do Syrah vines get to enjoy these great soils. The clones used in this old vineyard are not recorded.

The Cortese Vineyard is in the newest appellation of Napa, Coombsville, in southeast Napa Valley. It is a cool area for Napa with very rocky soils and was planted in the 1990's. It is on a western slope and planted to both the Estrella and Alban selection of Syrah.

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 2011 vintage was tough in terms of weather....very cool both during the growing season and harvest, with rain at the end. The crop size was smaller than normal, with both smaller berries and smaller clusters. Harvest was about normal with pick dates pushed into mid and late October. Although the wines turned out beautifully, it was a nail biting year.

Winemaking and Tasting Notes

The 2011 Casaeda Syrah was crushed and destemmed into open top fermentors, and left to cold soak for 4 days. The wine completed fermentation in 8 days. It was pressed at dryness, barreled immediately, and aged for 15 months in 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. It provides the tannic backbone of the wine.

The 2011 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 bold aromatics. The wine will also age well for the next few years. 507 cases were bottled in February 2013.

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