



2003 Syrah French Camp Vineyard

Cases Produced: 625

Harvest Date: 9/7/03

Numbers @ Harvest: Brix 25.2 pH 3.65 TA 0.77

Wine Numbers: 14.5 % Alc. 3.72 pH No R.S.

All of the fruit for this wine came from French Camp Vineyards, located in the mid-eastern portion of San Luis Obispo County, high up on a plateau and owned by the Miller family, the same people who own Bien Nacido Vineyards. This vineyard is in the middle of nowhere. I use just the top of the rows in block 53...who knows where the lower part of these rows go. The 2003 fruit was very ripe and clean. This is always the first fruit to come in for my harvest. The fruit is normally very dark, intense and forward, that is why I call the wine from this vineyard "Jungle boy". My philosophy for making this Syrah is to keep it on the more elegant style, if I can. The grapes are the Shiraz clone and made into a much more elegant style than those Aussie wines.

The grapes are 100% destemmed. I gently crush into 4' by 4' by 4' open top fermenters keeping the berries as whole as possible. The juice is slowly fermented with Ausmanhausen yeast to retain the fruity components. Punch down routines are performed to maximize the softer, more elegant nuances of the Syrah grape without extracting the more coarse, alcohol soluble components. The wine spends about 12 months in French and American oak barrels. I use one or two heavy char barrels to give it a touch of that smoky-bacon fat smell that makes your mouth water. I use about 30% new oak to obtain a sound backbone without overshadowing the fruit. The finished wine is unfinned and only gently filtered for visual clarity. It may throw sediment over time.

This Syrah is a bit more extracted than 2002, but very accessible; all the fun and fruit of a Syrah without excess tannins. The sweet juicy blackberry fruit is highlighted in the palate and the soft black pepper and smoke finish lingers to the next sip. It goes with almost any robust food dish and many light cream sauce dishes. Of course it turns most Asian dishes into a celebration. Speaking of celebration...try it with turkey or ham...yum-yum...Please enjoy it with friends!

Back Label: May you be as happy as Princess Sparkles