



2004 Syrah French Camp Vineyards

Cases Produced: 490

Harvest Date: August 17, 2004

Numbers @ Harvest: Brix 23.5 pH 3.67 TA 0.61

Wine Numbers: 13.8 % Alc. 3.70 pH No R.S.

All of the fruit for this wine comes from French Camp Vineyards, located in the mid-eastern portion of San Luis Obispo County, California, high up on a plateau. It is owned by the Miller family, the same people who own Bien Nacido Vineyards in Santa Barbara County. This vineyard is in the middle of nowhere. I use block 53 rows 40 through 60. It is a very steep South facing slope and the wonderful thing is that I am such good friends of the vineyard manager, Hank, that he let's me have just the top half of these rows...who knows where the lower part of these rows go. The 2004 fruit came in very early and was the most beautiful fruit I have ever seen from this vineyard. The normally large Syrah clusters looked almost identical to Pinot Noir..small berry size and cluster size! My philosophy for making this Syrah is to keep it in the more gentle style, if I can. The grapes are the Shiraz clone but 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 2004 Syrah is the most exciting tasting of all my years of making French Camp Syrah. I always ferment and handle the grapes in a very "Pinotesque" way but it still comes out as a beautiful, elegant Syrah tasting wine..NOT THIS YEAR. Tasting this wine blind, I was unsure if it was perhaps a high end Pinot Noir. The elegance and gentility screams Pinot Noir while the mouth weight and lingering fruit finish whispers Syrah. 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.It really doesn't matter if your friends think it is a Pinot or a Syrah, they WILL want more.

Back Label: Winner-Winner, Chicken Dinner (this is an old Southern saying for luck at games of chance like bingo, where the prize was often a chicken dinner). I came across this saying while working the Florida market a few years ago and laughed so hard that I knew I had to use it on a back label.