

Marelle

SYRAH

## Marelle 2003 Peay Sonoma Coast Syrah

### GRAPES

Peay Vineyard is a really cool place. It's located a few miles inland from the ocean in the northwestern corner of the Sonoma Coast appellation. In the coolest growing seasons, Syrah barely ripens at Peay. The benefit of growing Syrah at the climatic limit of suitable sites is that the grapes retain their turgor and vibrant flavors while tannins ripen. Which clone of Syrah? The Marelle block is the Estrella River selection on IIOR. When the grapes arrive, no one can resist repeat tasting because they are reminiscent of finished Côte Rôtie. Fortunately this charm is retained all the way to the bottle.

### VINIFICATION

Dawn-harvested clusters were completely destemmed and partially crushed to open top fermenters. Cold soak, punchdowns and fermentation ensued. A few days after dryness, the lot was membrane pressed, without rolling, to French oak barrels (33% new) where it aged sur lie for eight months before blending. The wine was bottled unfiltered and lightly filtered; natural sediment may precipitate.

### TECHNICAL DATA

Harvest date	13 October 2003
Composition	100% Peay Valley Sonoma Coast Syrah
Total acidity	5.7 g/L
pH at bottling	3.76
Alcohol	14.0
Residual sugar	0.4 g/L (0.04%) dry
Maturation	18 months in French oak (33% new)
Bottling date	11 April 2005

### WINEMAKER'S NOTES

2003 was a hot year in the vineyards – the warmest growing season on record. Relatively cool weather prevailed at the coast which completely prevented sun damage to the fruit. The wine was predominantly aged in older French oak barrels to preserve the vibrancy of the fruit and the wine's inherent richness derived from its own grape tannins.

From the first swirl, the wine offers exotic floral characteristics intermixed with cola, dark chocolate and an array of vibrant red and black fruits (black cherry, raspberry, plum, pomegranate and cranberry). The tannins are supple, silky and mouthfilling. The wine possesses an exquisite balance of acid, alcohol and tannins. It is simultaneously powerful and elegant. This wine is ready to enjoy today but will evolve well, without losing its fruit, over the next 3-5 years.

### WINEMAKER

Ashley Heisey