

Marelle 2005 California Syrah

GRAPES

A blend of Peay and Napa Valley grapes created a gem of a California bottling. **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 110R. When the grapes arrive, no one can resist repeat tastings because they are reminiscent of finished Côte Rôtie. Fortunately, this charm is retained all the way to the bottle. The Napa Valley vineyards are located in Coombsville (cooler places east of Napa Carneros) and are a stone's throw apart. **Simpkins Vineyard** is an east facing, one acre slope located on the corner of North and Second Avenues. Its Alban selections of Syrah lend sauvage character, meaty notes and supple, voluptuous tannins. **Cortese Vineyard** is the source of Marelle's intense black fruit and tannic structure. It is located in the hills above "the avenues". **Shearer Vineyard** is a west facing, steeply terraced vineyard located at the upper elevation of Coombsville. This low-yielding vineyard contributes deep purple color and pure, concentrated red fruit.

VINIFICATION

Dawn-harvested clusters were partially destemmed to open top fermenters. Cold soak, punchdowns and fermentation ensued. Individual lots were membrane pressed (without rolling) a few days after dryness to two year old French oak barrels where they aged sur lies until blending.

TECHNICAL DATA

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| Harvest dates | 29 September – 1 November 2005 |
| Composition | 99.6% Syrah 0.4% Viognier 67% Sonoma Coast - Peay Vineyard 33% Napa Valley - 15% Simpkins Vineyard, 10% Cortese Vineyard, 8% Shearer Vineyard |
| Total acidity | 5.8 g/L |
| pH at bottling | 3.89 |
| Alcohol | 13.7 |
| Residual sugar | 0.5 g/L (0.05%) dry |
| Elevage | 21 months in two year old French oak |
| Bottling date | 5 September 2007 |

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

2005 was a cool and late growing season. The Napa Valley vineyards ripened completely in late September and October. Peay Vineyard was picked as late as possible; it is the source of the white pepper and layers of vibrant spice and blue fruit. The wine shows off deep, purple color. The nose exudes a complex mix of white pepper, blueberry, dark cherry and floral aromas all of which are present until the end of the long, rich finish. This wine was made for immediate gratification and should be enjoyed from 2007 to 2009.

Winemaker: Ashley Heisey