



2005 Sleepy Hollow Syrah

The Vineyard

Sleepy Hollow Vineyard has long been known for its Chardonnay production and to a lesser extent for its Pinot Noir. I have worked with this vineyard since 1984 and only recently became aware that any Syrah existed on the site. Apparently, in 1994 Randall Graham of Bonny Doon fame had provided cuttings for Sam Balderas, Talbott's General Manager, to plant over on Sleepy Hollow B where the best Chardonnay comes from. There is approximately 6 acres in total planted there. The provenance of the cuttings came from somewhere in Cornas but nobody is saying where exactly.

The Harvest

These vines have had a bit of a struggle to survive in nature maybe do in part to their heritage and the fact that they are own rooted or possibly its due to virus but suffice it to say they look weakly and behind in normal growth rate. The fruit however looked quite strong and bunches were tiny and healthy. Little was required in terms of triage. Again with all of the fruit from across the Central Coast, the 35 plus inches of rain played a significant part in the development of the flavors. Harvest took place on October 21st a total of 8.739 tons from the six acres or 1.456 tons per acre.

The Wine

Typically we destem all of the Syrah grapes but in 2002 we began experimenting with some whole cluster fermentation and in 2005 we began utilizing all of the stems in the fermenters. The more I work with Syrah the more I feel like it shares the same evolution pattern and benefits from the same production techniques. Yes it has more soluble solids and density (more material) however it seemingly benefits from similar treatment of Pinot Noir. It does seem to produce more H₂S during fermentation and requires more oxygen to bind up the Hydrogen Sulfide throughout the fermentation and elevelage. We began fermentation right away with peak temperatures reaching 30 degrees centigrade during the 14 day cuvaision. The wine was pressed directly into 2 year old French oak barrels and allowed to sit in elevelage for 22 months. The finished wine was bottled without fining or filtration.