



2006 WILLAMETTE VALLEY SYRAH

BACKGROUND Syrah is, of course, one of the principal varieties grown up and down France's Rhone Valley. But it is in the northern part of that valley where that variety really comes into its own as a pure varietal wine, from such places as Côte Rôtie and Hermitage. Those vineyards lie just north of the 45th parallel like the vineyards in the north Willamette Valley. Now, while we don't put too much stock, from a wine standpoint, in being on the same parallel, it did lead us to wonder how Syrah from our vineyards would taste. So five years ago, we planted half an acre of one of the earliest-ripening clones of Syrah from France on our warmest site, the vineyard next to our winery on Calkins Lane.

GROWING SEASON Although storms carrying a lot of rain swept through Oregon in mid-January – slowing up pruning work – by the time spring rolled around, the 2006 growing season had caught up to what we assume to be “normal” timing in this day and age. Bud break occurred in the third week of March, and bloom about the second week of June. Perfect bloom weather resulted in too many clusters, each with too many berries. Thus, we had to spend a significant amount of time in “green harvest” passes to pare back the crop to what our climate could actually ripen. Harvest was accomplished in near perfect weather, warm enough that everything ripened smoothly, yet not all at once, with cool mornings for picking, and very little rain.

VINEYARD Our 52-acre Calkins Lane Vineyard provided 100% of the fruit for this wine. As our lowest-elevation site, set on marine sedimentary soils, Calkins Lane Vineyard yields wines of good structure, power, and a dense, fruit-driven core. The fruit was picked on October 14, 2006.

WINEMAKING Winemaker Dave Paige applied the same winemaking approach with our Syrah as he does with our Pinot noirs – gentle destemming, a three to four day cold soak for flavor and color extraction, and commercial yeast fermentation in a temperature-controlled, open-top fermenter that was punched down two to three times per day. The wine underwent a secondary, malolactic fermentation in a small, medium-toast, one-year-old French oak barrel and was aged in barrel for 10 1/2 months. The wine was bottled on August 24, 2007.

THE WINE This wine has the richness one expects from New World Syrahs, but the flavor profile is closer to that of a northern Rhone. It has amazing fruit - intense boysenberry and blue plums with hints of thyme and violets. Pair this wine, rich in flavor and texture, with hearty meat or vegetarian entrees.

THE LABEL The label features a drawing by Ginny Adelsheim of our winery as seen from our Calkins Lane Vineyard.

THE QUANTITY Production of this wine was just 88 cases, each with 12 bottles (750ml).

