

# *The Great Places*

## SYRAH

BALLARD CANYON AVA

2020

*August James Stolpman*

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### VINEYARD COMPONENTS

6,000 vine/acre own-rooted / head-pruned / pre-clonal  
GREAT PLACES August James Block Syrah

### GRAPE VARIETY

100% pre-clonal Syrah

### ALCOHOL

14%

### VINIFICATION FACTS

100% whole-cluster, 50% in a sealed stainless steel, 50%  
in concrete

### COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE

19 months in neutral 500L French ermitage puncheons  
only used for Roussanne in prior vintages

### HARVEST DATE

September 24

### TOTAL PRODUCTION

100 cases

### SENSORY

An appearance of opaque black with reflecting specks of red in the glass, signal the spectrum of flavor in the mouth. A nose of piercing red fruit parlaying into inky black depth. Tantalizing fresh with a berry crunch riding over. Ripe red fruit carries the day through the palate, lasting long after the finish of the finest malt-chalk tannin. The endless depth is already in seamless balance, yet in its youth, a lively energy arises in the mid-palate entwined with the red fruit.

### BACKGROUND

In early 2013, after a seminal visit to Domaine Auguste Clape the previous summer, we set out to model a vineyard after Clape's Reynard parcel. We propagated special pre-clonal Syrah cuttings from just 49 vines to 12,000, all head-pruned, own-rooted, and planted so densely that all work must be done by hand. The steep, east-facing hillside produced its first crop, barely 400 pounds of fruit, in 2017, the same year our son August, was born. Those grapes were bottled into 30 x 3 liter bottles so Auggie may drink his namesake vineyard from not only his birth year, but also his namesake vineyard's birth-year, on special occasions for the rest of his life.

### GREAT PLACES SYRAH

Syrachs that make the cut into our highest tier "The Great Places" come from just 8 acres of our steepest hillsides where we have taken an approach unprecedented in the New World. First, the pre-clonal strains are wholly unique and selected from 100 year old vineyard sites. Then, this Syrah material is planted own-rooted and head-pruned at just 2.5 x 3 feet spacing. Each vine puts all of its energy into ripening 2-3 clusters of concentrated, complex fruit each year. All work is done by hand.

The brand is named after one of our favorite Serine parcels in Cote-Rotie "Les Grandes Places".

### VINTAGE

The 2020 vintage started with much needed late rain in March and April. The cold moisture pushed back bud break and set up an anticipated late harvest. Ripening then accelerated after late summer heat waves. While the most significant heat wave arrived earlier in September over Labor Day weekend, another hot streak followed two weeks later.

The follow up effort to the 2019 Great Places August James Stolpman, viewed by both the Stolpman team and according to Critical review, "the most compelling wine" ever produced by Stolpman Vineyards – the heat of 2020 delivered an even denser, richer version of the cuvee.