

STOLPMAN VINEYARDS

BALLARD CANYON

SYRAH 2018 *Estate*

TECH

VINEYARD COMPONENTS

All Syrah blocks on vineyard

VARIETAL BLEND

100% Syrah

VINIFICATION

50% whole-cluster, no sulfur added through fermentation

FINAL ANALYSIS

alcohol: 14.1%

VATTING/FERMENTATION

Open-top Concrete fermenting tanks

COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE

100% neutral French oak 500L Puncheons, 10 months

RELEASE DATE

October 2019

HARVEST DATE

October 10-20 2018

TOTAL PRODUCTION

3900 cases

AT THE WINERY

From walking the vineyard daily during the long, leisurely weeks leading up to Syrah harvest, we had no doubt that the 2018 vintage would be densely packed with fruit concentration. The most confident we have ever been in fruit quality, we stepped off extraction even more than previous years. Many lots possessed a significant amount of un-popped grapes that we gently pressed before barreling. The result is a fineness and lift to the fruit density that not only is delicious, but adds another layer of texture and flavor above the more decadent ripe notes of 2018.

BACKGROUND

The most representative “flagship” bottling of the vineyard, Estate Syrah has become the calling card not only for Stolpman, but for the Ballard Canyon AVA.

Estate Syrah also symbolizes the evolution in viticulture and winemaking at Stolpman Vineyards. In the 1990s and well into the 2000s, this wine was made in a more heavy-handed style – employing extended macerations, forceful punch-downs multiple times daily, and new French oak barrels – all in the effort to make bigger, more extracted wines.

Today we rely on concentration derived from our version of dry-farming – no irrigation from fruit-set through picking. We are able to harvest small, undiluted grapes at the peak of freshness without the jammy flatness associated with longer hang-times and dehydrated fruit.

Confident that our grapes provide plentiful color, flavor, and texture; we now manage our fermentations much more gently – delicately circulating the juice and only using free run wine in an effort to eliminate harsh tannin and elevate the purity and nuance of the finished wine.

All in all, Estate Grown Syrah now reaches a finer balance and is more delicious drunk both young, and fully mature.

VINTAGE

Heat spikes alone usually define vintages in Santa Barbara County. Here, we are blessed to farm without fear of rain, rot, hail, and humidity. In 2018 the only heat wave we suffered through arrived so early, on July 7; that it didn't impact the fruit ripening or flavor profile. The summer turned into a moderate, steady dream year when acids hung high as sugar slowly accumulated and intense, nuanced flavor developed.

The heat-free 2018 vintage gave winemakers the chance to let fruit hang on the vine to achieve extreme ripeness with some semblance of balance and energy. While our more limited production 2018 Stolpman Syrah cuvees will show off this opulent ripeness, we were careful to keep the Estate Grown Syrah cuvee fresh and lively, completing harvest October 20th in the unusually late ripening year.

SENSORY

Super giving and generous, the Estate Grown Syrah will be the cuvee that proves the magic of the 2018 growing season for all who taste it. The first red wine release from our Ballard Canyon estate, it represents an unprecedented leap in “yum quotient” I couldn't have dreamt possible when I took over the company 10 years ago. The thick, tantalizing red fruit through the palate bears a strong correlation to the best 2018 St. Joseph Syrah bottlings we tasted on our team's June 2019 trip to France. I am thrilled we locked in the current fresh profile and bottled in early September, just over 10 months after harvesting. The fierce red fruit bursting through the palate brings me back to the cellar of Gonon while the hint of tar brooding beneath reminds me of Monier Perreol.

As the wine opens in the glass, more soul begins to emerge out of the pure prettiness. Not only is this wine a bombshell out of the gate, it will only begin to peak in 3-4 more years.