

STOLPMAN VINEYARDS

2011 LA CROCE

BALLARD CANYON

TECHNICAL & TASTING NOTES:

HARVEST DATES:
October 3 - 12th, 2011

VATTING:
18 - 21 days

COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE:
all neutral 228L barrique, for
16 total months elevage

WHOLE CLUSTER:
none

VINEYARD COMPONENTS:
blocks A3 Sangio & A6 Syrah

VARIETAL BLEND:
50% Syrah, 50% Sangiovese

FINAL ANALYSIS:
Alcohol: 14.5%, TA: 6.1g/L
pH: 3.7

BOTTLING DATE:
July 10th 2013

RELEASE DATE:
October 1st 2013

CASE PRODUCTION:
225 Cases



Upon starting his tenure at Stolpman Vineyards in 2001, Sashi felt called to take advantage of the simultaneous Syrah and Sangiovese harvest. While walking the vineyard with Alberto Antonini, Tom Stolpman, Ruben Solorzano and I; he silently pondered the opportunity. In 2001, the Super Tuscan craze of blending indigenous Italian grapes with international varieties had swept through Chianti and Bolgheri and captivated the wine world. Sashi was hesitant to chase a wine trend and planned on keeping his thoughts to himself.

The meeting took place on a typically foggy Ballard Canyon morning, and the low clouds drifted through the hawk perch crosses as the group walked the vineyard blocks. Ruben spoke up, mentioning that the Catholic Cuadrilla thought the vineyard was a sacred place because of mornings like this. We paused to take in the beauty of the scene when Dad asked Alberto, "How do you say Cross in Italian?"

"La Croce"

Sash couldn't resist the coincidence, "we could name a wine La Croce after these crosses, but the meaning would be deeper, the wine would actually be a cross of Sangiovese and Syrah, Italy and France."

With Tom and Alberto's blessing, the young, ambitious Sashi Moorman decided to go all out. Not only would the two varietals be picked and fermented together, he would take the end caps off of new French barrels and actually ferment in the barrels, press and replace the caps, and then age the wine in them.

We received quite a bit of curiosity and press from the experiment, but after a couple years of trials, Sashi decided that the trouble of deconstructing barrels didn't affect the end product. We have, however, continued the unusual experiment of co-fermenting approximately 50% Syrah with 50% Sangiovese to make one, gorgeous red blend.

While the 2011 La Croce rivals 2011 Hilltops Syrah for stealing my heart, the La Croce's firm structure calls for a more sophisticated, structured appreciation. It's not that the wine is tight and needs time although it is certainly 5-10 years away from peaking. If anything, the Sangiovese and Syrah are so well integrated through co-fermentation it becomes difficult to pick apart individual flavors.

This is the perfect girl who you brush off as way out of your league; beautiful, well-adjusted, intelligent; and if you're lucky enough to get your hands on a bottle, tasting 2011 La Croce might remind you of waking up to realize you've married that girl!

The depth and richness of the 2011 La Croce exemplify the best of New World winemaking and what Italians set out to accomplish by blending more expansive varietals with medium bodied, tannic Italians. - *Peter Stolpman*