

STOLPMAN

Hair of the Bear

75% Petite Sirah / 25% Roussanne
215 cases produced



Stolpman's Polished Petite Sirah

We've bottled wine from the 3.5 acre 1992 planting of Petite Sirah on only a few occasions. Especially in the extremes of Ballard Canyon, winemakers must wait for the Petite Sirah skins to soften in order to avoid burly, coarse tannins. This often means picking at extremely high sugars and bottling wines with hotter alcohol levels than we prefer.

In 2016, winemaker Kyle Knapp had the brilliant idea of co-fermenting the powerful, black varietal with soft, rich, and cushioning Roussanne. Roussanne ripens extremely late here on the vineyard, so it naturally brings the sugar content down – translating to 1.5% less alcohol than if we left the Petite Sirah monocepage. During fermentation, the golden Roussanne polishes the raw power of the Petite Sirah into an elegant, fine wine.

In recognition of the winemaker's triumphant experiment, artist Eric Beltz drew a rugged, older, perhaps more dapper version of Kyle Knapp emerging from the wilderness with a domesticated bear by his side. A parallel to Roussanne taming the wild Petite Sirah.

The term "Hair of the Bear" described a top-notch frontiersman or trapper back in the days of the Wild West and California Gold Rush.

A second year of drought reduced our 2022 yields and led to a small crop. Our vines naturally set only a few tiny clusters each, resetting themselves after over-delivering a healthy 2021 yield despite the lack of rain. A Labor Day heatwave further intensified the ripe flavor concentration of the tiny clusters. With the small fruit-load, the vines continued powering through the fall. We waited until October 18th, 2022 to harvest Hair of the Bear – perhaps the blackest and boldest rivaling the 2016 and 2020 vintages.

A titanic black spear jutting into a dark night, reflecting only the swirling stars high above. Subtle acid and tannin propels the otherwise smooth, seamless beast upwards out of its fern-lined cave. Despite hitting the next dimension of intensity, the wine remains lush and opulent – the passengers within that spear-shaped space craft relax in luxury.

Vintage 2022

Region Ballard Canyon AVA

Components Block 1 Petite Sirah (1992 planting) and L'Avion runway block 7 (2000 planting)

Farming Certified Organic & Biodynamic

Harvest Date October 18

Vinification 100% de-stemmed

Vatting/Fermentation Native fermentation in open top concrete tanks for 22 days

Cooperage & Elevage 500L neutral French Vache Forest Ermitage puncheons for 22 months

14.5% Alc by Vol

≠ Estate, So Fresh, Combe ≠

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