

STOLPMAN

La Croce

50% Syrah / 50% Sangiovese
580 cases produced



Stolpman's Super Tuscan Blend

When consultant Alberto Antonini first came to the vineyard in January of 2001, he was shocked to hear the coincidence of Syrah and Sangiovese ripening together at the vineyard. Alberto had dreamt of such a parallel his entire career in Italy. More specifically, he thought co-fermenting red-hued, high-strung Sangiovese with dark, savory Syrah would create the benchmark for all Super Tuscan blends to follow. But in Italy, Alberto found that Syrah ripened a month ahead of Sangiovese, rendering his dream impossible – until he arrived in Ballard Canyon.

We prefer to co-ferment grapes rather than blending finished wine because the elements of each varietal integrate together through the process of fermentation. Primary flavor traits develop during the first portion of fermentation, and if that development happens with varietals already combined, the wine will be markedly different than trying to blend separate lots later. Of course, the reason few modern winemakers employ co-fermentation is the inherent lack of control. La Croce is truly vineyard-crafted.

Alberto turned out to be right. After our first stab at co-fermenting Sangiovese and Syrah in 2001, we were hooked. In 2004 we planted three clones of high-density Sangiovese along a ridgeline surrounded on either side with Syrah. Sangiovese trails behind Syrah in ripening, so we give it all-day sunshine on the hilltop while each Syrah block only receives partial-day direct exposure on either hillside.

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. Most 2022 reds tell the tale of the vintage through intense full-throttle concentration. Always classy, La Croce carries the weight effortlessly, already composed and sophisticated upon release.

At first glance, La Croce pops and flares. That attention grabbing brightness sizzles into a deeper soul of black cherry and clove. The captivating high-wire balancing act of Sangiovese reds versus darker Syrah hues plays out through the mouth. A cannon blast of energy channeled and centered in timeless grace. The wine pairs well with Olympic gymnastics (written during Paris 2024 Olympics which will seem like ancient history when this collectible hits its peak).

Vintage 2022

Region Ballard Canyon AVA

Components Block A hillside
Syrah and Block A Hilltop
Sangiovese

Farming Certified Organic &
Biodynamic

Harvest Date September 27

Vinification Co-fermented,
100% de-stemmed

Vatting/Fermentation Native
fermentation in open-top
concrete tanks for 21 days

Cooperage & Elevage 500L
neutral French Vache forest
Ermitage puncheons for 18
months

14% Alc by Vol

≠ Estate, So Fresh, Combe ≠

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