



2003 Caldwell Vineyards Syrah

Appellation: Napa Valley
Harvest Date: 10/22/03 & 10/25/03
Tons: 7.16
Brix: 25.7
Alc.: 15.7%
pH: 3.96
TA: .61 g/100ml
Yeast: D80/Syrah/D21/43
Malo-Lactic: 100%
Production: 337 cases
Vineyard Clone: Estrella/470/383/174
Soil Type: Aiken Series
Elevation: 500 feet
Aging: 18 months, 60 gallon barrels; 70% French Oak, 30% American Oak, 100% New Oak
Composition: 100% Syrah

Vineyard History

The Caldwell Vineyard is 123 acres, with 60 of them planted to grape vines. It sits 500 feet above sea level giving panoramic views of Napa Valley, Mayacamas and Vaca Ranges. Grapes were first planted at the Caldwell site in 1982 with cuttings brought into the country using "creative" means. John's nursery is now a major source of French clones to other vineyards. The fruit for JC Cellars is sampled from 3 different lots, each planted with different Syrah clones.

The soil at the vineyard is very shallow at 2 ½ feet deep. It's primarily a reddish soil with volcanic ash and rocks mixed in for good measure. This type of soil is technically referred to as Aiken Series. All of this adds up to great drainage and poor nutrients. Or to put it another way, great wine grapes.

The weather at Caldwell Vineyards has a lot of similarities to its neighboring AVA, Carneros. The cool breezes brought in from San Pablo Bay help to moderate temperatures during the summer, providing for a long growing season. The vineyard sits above the fog line giving the vineyard full sun exposure; ensuring great hang time and fully ripened Syrah.

Cellar Practices

One of our best vineyard sources for Syrah, the fruit is treated with meticulous care. Immediately crushed/destemmed into ½ ton open top fermenters and cold soaked for 3 days. Once inoculated with a combination of yeasts isolated from the Rhone region, the must was punched down five times a day by hand. The temperatures reached just over 90 degrees F at the peak of fermentation.

Due to the warmer fall season, the 2003 vintage was picked about 2 weeks earlier than the previous year creating a more balanced wine. Each lot was picked individually to ensure fully ripened fruit while still maintaining the vineyard's terroir.

A perfect combination of California ripeness and the soul of the Northern Rhone are found in this Syrah. The wild blackberry and cassis fruit are laced with hints of smoked game, roasted herbs, vanilla bean and lavender.

Tasting Notes

Another classic in the making. This is actually my favorite Caldwell Vineyard so far. I think it's Syrah purity and the roasted herbs de Provence / blackberry / raspberry combination in the aromatics and flavors that are so exotic and incredibly layered that it's hard to resist.

