



ampelos cellars

2017 sta. rita hills "gamma" syrah

certified sustainability in practice, organic, and biodynamic



harvest

- our syrah harvest started on october 3 with estrella clone from block 4 and four days later with the 470 from block 6. the chilly summer prolonged the ripening of the flavors and allowed us to pick syrah late – the weather cooperated and the grapes were in good shape when they arrived at the winery– flavors, color, tannins, acids and structure was balanced and ready
- crop levels were at 2.6 ton per acre – almost as low a yield as in 2015
- brix ranged from 24.0 to 25.5, pH between 3.56 and 3.69. good sugar levels, great acids and combined with the characteristics described below it is truly amazing the balance we can get in syrah from santa rita hills! balance is the key.

wine making style

- the fruit spent the night in a cold room to drop the temperature
- the grapes were de-stemmed into small 1½ ton open top fermenters. peter likes to taste the stems when we destem to decide if he wants to include them. In one of the batches we decided to include stems – they tasted and smelled right
- cold soaked for 8-9 days after which the natural, wild fermentation kicked in. all native yeast fermentation
- fermentation finished in 9-12 days with 2 daily punch downs
- after 3-6 days of extended maceration we drained the free-run (~80%) and gave the remainder a gentle press
- the wine was then racked into oak barrels allowing the natural, wild malolactic bacteria to begin the secondary fermentation
- the wine was not racked but spent almost 3 years barrel aging – it is unfinned and unfiltered

character

- syrah, our 'black beauty' of the sta. rita hills never fails to deliver a dark rich garnet hue filled with a back palate of earth and spice that makes a statement
- with the cool temperatures and ocean fog that we receive, our syrah clusters have a very long hang time. this weather and slow maturation process give gamma balanced notes of white cracked pepper, earthy blueberry, floral notes and Indian spice.
- a kick of chocolate cherries and slate minerality bring finish to this great ride.

appellation	sta. rita hills
composition	100% estate: 46% clone Estrella and 54% clone 470. 6% stem inclusion
vineyard source	ampelos vineyard
alcohol	14.0%
pH /acid	3.63 / 6.6

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barrel aging

33 months

oak profile

19% new oak: one french barrel and one hybrid barrel with american staves and french heads. the rest is neutral oak