

BUTTONWOOD

Overview

Our homage to hermitage! 100% Syrah in the Northern Rhone style from our most western block of our estate vineyard.

In the Vineyard

When visitors to the Buttonwood Farm tasting room ask the location of the vines, we can point to the just visible western edge of our mesa top vineyard. That would be our Syrah block 8, bravely fronting the daily “breezes” which kick up each day from the nearby Pacific Ocean. It is a windswept but sunny block, planted east to west with 8x10 spacing on alluvial soils. Our 2-acre Block 8 enjoys a long growing season, allowing the clusters extended hang-time on the vine for superb balance and flavor development.

The Vintage

Budbreak, grape set and veraison came along on schedule and ripening progressed at a nice pace due to moderate weather. Just when we were resting on our laurels, a five day, triple-digit heat spike arrived in August, accelerating ripening across the vineyard. October then brought a weird harvest rainstorm, dumping over an inch and a half of water during the storm. Syrah just soaked these anomalies up with no worries, and continued its path to perfect ripening. Finally on November 2nd, the ‘velvet purses’ made their appearance, the grapes tasted delicious and pH, acids and sugars all in balance – pick!

Winemaking

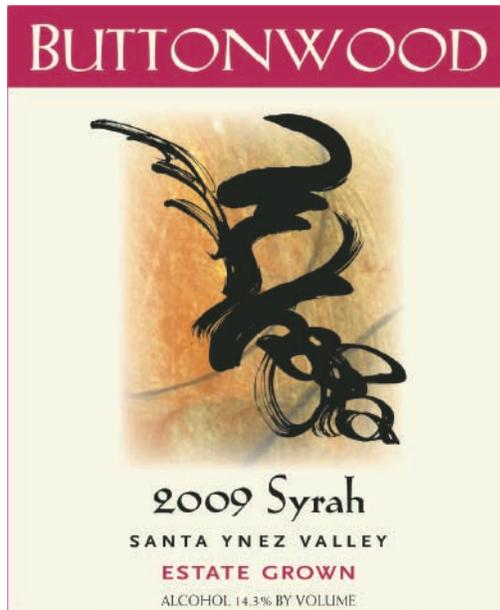
The vineyard crew loves picking Syrah, with its big clusters hanging low on the vine and so it was a happy day in early November when we hand-harvested the Syrah at 24.4 brix. Native fermentation began while cold soaking, and the bins were brought into the cellar and inoculated with SYRAH yeast on November 6th. A rather fast and furious fermentation kept the cellar crew on their toes, with hand punch downs 2-3 times each day to keep the fermentation temperatures under control and continue the extraction from the dark skins. Once dry, the free run wine was drained to a combination of puncheons and barriques (including 2 new Eastern European oak barrels), and the skins pressed to neutral puncheons. The wine underwent malo-lactic fermentation in barrel and aged on lees until a racking in August of 2010. Taste tests of each barrel and blending trials resulting in a 2009 Syrah assemblage, and that blend was returned to barrel to marry and integrate. In February of 2011, the barrels were racked to tank, the wine lightly filtered and bottled. As with all of our wines, the newly bottled wine was allowed time to rest and integrate in the cellar before release. This wine is suitable for vegans.

Tasting Notes

Dark and garnet hued with the purpley edges of a young wine, the 2009 Syrah almost broods in the glass. A swirl unleashes sweet fruit aromas interlaced with smokey bacon-like notes. The color and bouquet of the wine lead to expectations of dark fruit, so the palate is somewhat surprised by red fruit characteristics – boysenberry, rhubarb, red currant and even ‘red vines licorice’. A creamy, smooth texture also brings dusty, earthy tannins to the mélange of fruit, spice and meaty flavors. Hints of blueberry then mingle with the rocky, earthy vineyard component so typical of all our wines. Lively acidity provides a beautiful platform for the wine, which finishes with a pleasant herb d’provence spiciness. This wine will continue to improve with age, put a few bottles away for a few years if you can!

Pairing ideas

Herb-crusted Baron of Lamb, Grilled Summer vegetables, and hearty stews.



Grown, Produced and Bottled by Buttonwood Farm Winery
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