



Negrette

Cienega Valley

Our inky Negrette is big and bold with aromas of wild plum, tobacco and leather. Its rich mouthfeel and lingering tannins are well suited to lamb, venison or beef with heavy sauces.

Technical Data

Appellation: Cienega Valley

Varietal content: 99% Negrette,
1% Alicante Bouchet

Yield: .5 tons per acre

Finished alcohol: 15.1%

pH: 3.70

Total acid: 6.65g/L

Vineyards

DeRose has a handful of "old-vine" varieties on its Cienega Valley estate, but none is more exotic than a 10-acre planting of Negrette. These vines are even rare in their native land of France where records show only 100 acres cultivated in the Toulouse region on the Garonne River. Adding to the mystique, the variety was called "Pinot St. George" until the BATF changed its official name effective with the '97 vintage.



Planted on their own roots in the 1880s, the old vines are dry farmed in gray clay-loam soils that contain large chunks of dolomite. This shimmering white mineral is mostly calcium, an essential element of good soil. Relatively young in geologic time, these loose soils allow vines to extend deep and wide in search of water and nutrients. Yields average one ton per acre.

Cienega Valley is an elevated pocket in the Gabilan Mountains 1,100 feet above sea level. The region's warm, dry conditions are interrupted each day by cool air flowing from Monterey Bay, 25 miles west. The Gabilan Range is high enough to protect vines from direct contact with the cold coastal air, but low enough to allow breezes to mitigate the heat of summer afternoons. Rainfall averages 15 inches per year while fog is rare. This temperate climate is well suited to producing rich red wines.

Fermentation

Clusters were destemmed leaving much of the fruit intact. The must (5% whole clusters) was transferred to open-top stainless steel tanks and macrobins for three days of cold soaking. Temperatures were increased and fermentations started with native yeasts. Tanks were pumped over and bins were punched down three or four times daily during the 15 to 18 day process. Lots were pressed, allowed to undergo secondary fermentation, and settled for about two weeks. They were blended and racked four times during 15 months of aging in French oak barrels. The wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.