



Parróne Syrah

Colchagua Valley, Chile

This wine was created from a blend of two different clones of Syrah from the Santa Julia estate of Vina El Huique in the Colchagua Valley. This area is well known as Chile's premier wine growing region. The grapes were hand harvested, allowed to cold soak for one week and fermented with native yeasts for 15 days before pressing off to small French oak barrels. The wine then underwent malolactic fermentation with a native culture. Our Syrah is rich in aromas of blueberries, smoked bacon and toast, with a soft round mouthfeel. Uncork, allow to breathe and taste the terroir of Chile.

—Winemaker Alphonse DeRose

Technical Data

Appellation: Colchagua Valley

Varietal content: 100% Syrah

Yield: 4 tons per acre

Finished alcohol: 13.9%

pH: 3.57

Total acid: 5.7g/L

Vineyards

Fruit was sourced from the Talhuen Estate in central Chile's Colchagua Valley near the town of San Miguel. The property is situated forty miles from the Pacific Ocean at 1,100 feet above sea level on the western slope of the Andes Mountains.

Unknown to most North Americans, the Colchagua Valley has been producing wine grapes since the late 1800s. Its Mediterranean climate, moderate precipitation and well-drained soils create ideal conditions for growing exceptional wine grapes. Temperatures range from the mid-80s to the low-90s with an overnight drop of only 20 degrees for much of the growing season. The region sees sporadic afternoon breezes and very little fog. Consequently, vines benefit from extended hours of sunlight with western exposure.

In 2000, syrah clones 99 and 300 were planted on their own roots in a range of soils, the majority being a deep, sandy clay-loam. Vines are trained in the vertical shoot position on bilateral cordons to best utilize the semi-fertile soil. Rows are arranged in a north-south configuration with 5'x7' spacing.

Non-till farming is used exclusively while irrigation is minimal.

Growing Season

Vintage 2004 followed a winter of normal rainfall (18 inches) and temperatures (lows in the 30s and 40s). Prompting early budbreak (September 15), the pleasant conditions lingered through November to ensure good fruit set. Spring rains would minimize the need for irrigation later in the year. Half the clusters were thinned at berry enlargement while wings and green bunches were removed just after veraison to promote even ripening. Summer and fall were consistently warm. The latter was interrupted by three light storms a few weeks before harvest, but the weather stabilized in time for crush. Yields were slightly above average and the quality was excellent.

Fermentation

Fruit was destemmed and cold soaked for five days in coated concrete tanks. Temperatures were allowed to rise; fermentations started on native yeasts; and tanks were pumped over three times daily. The wines were fermented dry in 15 days while secondary fermentations began without help. After five-to-seven days of extended maceration, the wines were pressed, blended and then transferred to small oak barrels (20% new, 90% French, 10% American) for three rackings and 18 months of aging. The finished wine was lightly filtered before bottling and aged for two months prior to release.

