

2018 GRENACHE

JOHN SEBASTIANO
SANTA RITA HILLS

Ah, Grenache! The darling grape of so many winemakers, yet so poorly understood by the average consumer. A big cause of that is it's somewhat uncommon to see bottled as a stand-alone varietal; while it's often a critical blending grape for bringing vibrancy and aroma in more southern latitudes, it often needs help from other varietals to bring depth. But special vineyards can bring out an ethereal completeness in Grenache, which takes us to John Sebastiano

A lot of the Grenache world is pretty warm, if not hot. But here on the eastern edge of Sta. Rita Hills this varietal struggles to build sugar with the coastal wind that scours these slopes (so it's usually the last fruit we harvest). That allows us to develop color and flavor in the grapes while avoiding the high brix ripeness that tends to efface this grape's subtler charms. Instead we have something with knockout spicy fruit flavor, but with a feel more in tune with Pinot Noir than Syrah. And that's a great thing—Chateau Rayas has shown for years that stand-alone Grenache is terrific when it's not 16% alcohol and uber-textured.

Still, this site's Grenache-ness is intense, with an earth-inflected fruity aroma that fills the glass like vapor. Imagine the scents that might greet a bartender muddling mixed berries (heavy on the raspberry) with a hit of kirsch, lavender and allspice—this expands outward, and that juicy berry medley fleshes out a supple, easy-going palate that closes with spicy tannin. It can be paired with most of what you can pair Pinot Noir with but also with things a bit rich for pinot, like pastor or jambalaya. Though all by itself is very nice too!

BLEND 100% Grenache
VINEYARDS John Sebastiano
AVA Santa Rita Hills
ALCOHOL 14%
VINIFICATION 100% Neutral French Oak
BARREL AGING 15 Months
TOTAL PRODUCTION 236 Cases

109 S. MONTGOMERY ST. OJAI, CALIFORNIA
805.798.3947
TASTINGROOM@OJAIVINEYARD.COM
OJAIVINEYARD.COM

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