



2015 BROKEN AXLE STAGECOACH VINEYARD - NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2015 growing season in the Napa Valley started out with unseasonably warm temperatures in the late winter and early spring. This resulted in early bud break and bloom. Colder temperatures in May (during the peak of bloom) caused uneven fruit set which ultimately resulted in much smaller crop in 2015, compared to both average yields and the three abundant preceding years. The harvest was one of the earliest on record. While ongoing drought was of great concern, we received 75% of normal rainfall for the water year. The most notable occurrence of 2015 was the devastating Valley Fire that broke out in Lake County to the north in September. Although the fire was tragic for the residents of Lake County, prevailing winds blew the fire's smoke away from the Napa Valley.

Vineyard

Stagecoach Vineyard is the largest contiguous vineyard in the Napa Valley spanning multiple AVAs, and four distinct regions. With planting started in 1995, billions of pounds of volcanic rock were removed. Heavy mining equipment is used to prepare the soil before planting. There are behemoth dump trucks that have lived and died on the property inspiring the name "Broken Axle." Our blocks of Syrah (Alban clone) and Grenache (Alban clone) are located in the Pritchard Hill region of the property at 1500' elevation. The soils are red Hambright complexes and with Guenoc outcroppings. Dynamite was used to clear this well-exposed southwest slope. The soils are de-vigorating to the vines due to great drainage and sparse nutrients. The vines produce light crops of extremely small black berries transforming into intense, powerful wines.

Winemaking

Grapes were hand-harvested and arrived at the winery at dawn. Once received, the grapes were sprinkled with dry ice to keep cold and protect from oxidation. The Syrah (10% whole-cluster) and Grenache were gravity-fed to a stainless steel open top fermenter. A significant saignée was taken from the Grenache to concentrate the fruit. Gentle pump-overs extracted what we needed during the co-fermentation, and we pressed when primary fermentation was complete. Secondary fermentation finished natively by Spring 2016. The wine was aged for 20 months in neutral French oak barrels. Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered.

Tasting Notes

The Broken Axle is always dark and extracted, but the 2015 is especially dark due to the low yields from Stagecoach in 2015. Ripeness was achieved easily with the light crop. Blueberry, sweet baking spice and tanned leather frame a plush texture and silky tannins. We frequently pair this wine with cured meats and charcuterie - always a crowd pleaser. Optimum drinking window is 7-12 years.

Analysis

Harvested: September 25, 2015 and October 15, 2015
Composition: 61% Syrah, 39% Grenache
Alcohol: 15.4%
Bottling Date: May 2017
Release Date: April 2020
Production: 101 cases

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