

THE
STEVEN KENT
WINERY

“Liquid Amber”

2006 BARBERA, HOME RANCH VINEYARD, LIVERMORE VALLEY

It has taken longer than it should have, but I think I've just about got this patience thing licked. As I have written many times over the past 12 years, one of the things that makes wine so compelling is its mutability. Sometimes for the worse, mostly for the better, the wine that is just through malo-lactic fermentation is not the same one that flourishes under oak and bottle age. I did not particularly like the 2006 vintage of Barbera when I did my first barrel tasting of it in March 2007. Instead of fixing that wine in my mind then, I would have done what any rational person would: I would have reminded myself that this is just one point in time...evolving, not dead. Well I am glad I was as wrong as I was. The 2006 vintage of Barbera turned out to be another in a growing line of delicious examples of this grape grown on our HRV site.

The aromas of dark plum, cherry, toasty oak, and anise explode out of the glass of the 2006 Barbera. In the mouth, the flavors of plum, leather, and oak are matched by the wine's wonderful mid-palate viscosity. Unlike previous releases in which the acid was nearly mouth-puckering, this wine trades a little of its finishing acidity for a broad spectrum of tannins. One can certainly envision drinking this wine with a nicely seared roast of pork or spice-rubbed lamb.

The longer grapes hang the more sugar is produced and the more acid is lost. Being a varietal prone to very high acid, Barbera benefits greatly from the extra hang-time. In fact in 2006, we harvested Barbera on October 25th, a full two weeks after Sangiovese and the Cabernet Sauvignon, McGrail Vineyard. The extra time produced a beautifully balanced wine whose acidity tends to heighten the sense of fruitiness while containing it at the same time. This wine should continue to evolve over the next five years.

HISTORY

The Home Ranch is composed of three different blocks, totaling 5.8 acres. The Cabernet and Sangiovese blocks were planted in 1996 and the first vintage of wine from these grapes was made in 2000. The Barbera was planted in 1997; its first vintage was 2001. Originally part of a 90-acre vineyard dating back to the 1870's, the Home Ranch provides fruit for some of our most sought-after wines.

VINTAGE

Harvest Date: October 25, 2006
Fruit: 100% Barbera from the Home Ranch.
Fermentation: After destemming and crushing just under 6.9 tons of fruit were fermented in a single stainless-steel tank. Fermentation and maceration lasted about 10 days. Alc. 14.3%
Aging: This wine was aged in predominantly new American oak barrels. A smaller percentage of Hungarian and French barrels were used.
Time in Barrel: 18 months
Release Date: January 10, 2009

VINEYARD

Location: East of central Livermore Valley, planted on the leavings of the Arroyo Mocho riverbed.
Soil: Mixed, predominantly riverbed gravel with small amounts of clay on the northern end of the site.
Training: Vertical Shoot Position (VSP) trellis. Vines are planted in a 6' x 6' configuration.

ARTWORK

“Liquid Amber” is a water color creation by Sharon Damato. She was born and raised in her beloved San Francisco. She loved to draw and paint. She preferred working in water color, but was very talented in every medium she pursued. Sharon passed away on August 11, 2008 at the age of 65. She was very modest and never admitted to how talented she was. She would be amazed and thrilled to think that one of her paintings would be selected to be a Steven Kent wine label.