

THE
STEVEN KENT
WINERY

“Long House”

2008 SANGIOVESE, HOME RANCH VINEYARD, LIVERMORE VALLEY

The 2008 vintage of Sangiovese from our Home Ranch vineyard in Livermore is the eighth vintage we have produced. Enough wine has flowed under the bridge (or down the gullet) to make some general observations about the varietal and how it fares in Livermore.

The great grape of Tuscany, Sangiovese, has been grown in California (in very small quantity) for over a hundred years. Our first vintage in 2000 came off a vineyard block planted in 1996. We have consistently produced Sangiovese that is of medium body when compared to Cabernet, but that shows an abundance of ripe, cherry-centric fruit. Unlike the Italian version, our wines are much rounder in the mouth, with plusher tannin and a significant overlay of newer oak. California Sangiovese tends to have less of the earthen edge and focused acidity as the Italian version does; but these characteristics are in keeping, I think, with our climate and the tastes of the majority of our club members.

Given higher alcohol levels and a bit less acidity, I think that our wines are drinkable at a younger age and don't age as long as the Italians. Aging potential, however, is a tenuous guess at best, and generally doesn't affect one's enjoyment in the shorter term with a wine like Sangiovese.

The 2008 vintage is wonderfully characteristic: explosive aromas and flavors of bright red cherry and raspberry, subtle cardamom and baking spices. In the mouth, this wine really shows its youthful acidity on entry as well as relatively significant tannin mid-palate to finish. As the wine breathes, the mid-palate viscosity begins to assert itself, bringing forward dried black cherry and plum notes and broadening the tannins. *Long House* finishes extremely long, and it's abundant acid should allow the wine to age well over the next five years and allow it to pair beautifully with a wide variety of cuisines.

You'll notice that this release is packaged in screwcap bottles. The benefits of this kind of closure are numerous. Apart from its ability to minimize cork taint, it has been shown to allow early-drinking wines such as those made for the Collector's Circle to maintain their fruit-forward quality. Maybe the best part is that nothing more stands in your way of drinking this wonderful Sangiovese than a quick twist of the cap!

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 11, 2008
Fruit: 100% Sangiovese harvested at just over 25°. Alc. 15.0%
Fermentation: After destemming and crushing, fruit was fermented in 1 ½ ton open-topped fermenters. The wine was pressed off after about 10 days.
Aging: 6 barrels, from a larger lot, were selected for this wine. 67% new oak (75% French, 25% Hungarian); 33% second use (French oak).
Time in Barrel: 14 months
Release Date: March 6, 2010

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

“*Long House*” was created by Katherine Mirassou, 16 years old at the time. This is Katherine's second label for the Collector Circle and was made as an answer to a school assignment on the use of perspective.