



The Steven Kent Winery

2003 Vincere
Home Ranch Vineyard
Livermore Valley

Blend: 59% Sangiovese 41% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alc.: 13.9% Retail: \$40

Anybody with a palate for a big, bold Cab is a potential sucker for a Super Tuscan. Steven Mirassou is one of them, and he knows he has plenty of company out there. This wine was created from vines on the Home Ranch surrounding the winery in Livermore. The 2003 vintage was somewhat of a challenge in that it brought periods of extremes, which in Livermore means water issues. It's a fine balance between risking damage due to lack of water when temperatures spike, and being too wet when temperatures moderate. Too much water can dilute the fruit, which leads to watered-down wine.

The vineyard management practices are evident in the fine craftsmanship displayed in this vintage, the fourth of this super-Tuscan blend. Grapes are harvested and vinified separately, hand-punched down three times daily during primary fermentation and barrel-aged for 18 months. In this case, the wines were blended shortly after primary fermentation, enabling them to truly marry in 92.9% new oak, primarily French. *Yum.*

The label on this wine is classic Italian art by artist Colleen Wells, and although it is brooding and somehow unsettling (to me anyway: it looks like Titus Andronicus plotting something sinister), the wine is anything but. It is constructed like a Tuscan villa, massive, and stylish with powerful, yet seamless angles. The earthy aromas of wet clay and bricks mingle with plums and cherries, creating an inviting sense of mystery. On the palate the first impression is one of ultra-sleek silkiness: the mouthfeel is among the most enjoyable I've ever experienced in a wine, let alone a Cabernet-blend. The flavors of cherry, blackberry, basil and a touch of exotic cinnamon and perhaps star anise, are wrapped deftly around a very solid and taut core of acidity that is mouthwateringly pleasant. The tannins are soft and smooth, creating the sensation of a Persian carpet beneath your feet as you enter a magnificent tile-floored portico. This wine is all that: sophisticated, sensual and seductive. With each sip, it draws you closer to the heart of what makes Livermore more intriguing by the glass.