

2005 Sangiovese – “Last Light”

Rainfall in the first four months of the year (12.33 inches, and 164.5% of average) nearly totaled the amount of rainfall expected in a full year in the Livermore Valley. The second half of the year was much drier, and coupled with steady and cooler than normal temperature through much of the growing season contributed to one of those very rare years described by high-quality fruit and large amounts of it. Veraison on the home Ranch happens in stages with Sangiovese starting first followed by Barbera then Cabernet. In August, we typically begin taking sugar and acid readings. 2005 was like most years in that Sangiovese, the first of the blocks to color-up, was also the first to be harvested. Sometimes prone to unbalanced sugar and acid (especially if the grower is looking for quantity instead of quality) we allow our fruit to hang long enough to achieve a balance between potential alcohol and finishing acidity. We harvested 7.1 tons of Sangiovese on October 3rd. The long harvest season allowed for the formation of wonderful flavors and balance between sugar and acid. Brix levels at harvest were 26°, and the wine finished with an alcohol level of 14.7%. The wine, characterized by dense cherry liqueur flavors, a voluptuous mid-palate, and bracing acidity on the finish, went through malolactic fermentation in barrel and was aged in predominantly American oak barrels for 14 months.

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 1870s, the Home Ranch provides fruit for some of our most sought-after wines.

VINTAGE

Harvest Date: October 3, 2005

Fruit: 26.0° brix at harvest.

Fermentation: After destemming and crushing, fruit was fermented in 1/2 ton open-topped fermenters using BM45 yeast. The wine was pressed off after about 10 days. Alcohol 14.7%.

Aging: 17 barrels, 71% new (French 50%, Hungarian 30%, American 21%). The remainder were second and third use. The 10 best barrels were chosen for this Collector's Circle offering.

Barrel Time: 14 months

VINEYARD

Location: East of central Livermore Valley, planted on the leavings of the Arroyo Mocho riverbed; n 37° 39' 50.40" Latitude, w 121° 43' 41.84" Longitude

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.

GROWING SEASON

Rainfall: 18.85 inches.

Bloom: May

Weather: Very wet winter led to mild summer. Cool and stable temperatures contributed to a relatively long growing season with some lots coming into the winery 30 days later than the year before.

ARTWORK

Inspired by the scenic beauty of Italy's countryside, Scott Cleek's most recent collection of landscapes entitled "Remembering Tuscany," aims to capture the timeless spirit, serenity, and mood of this beautiful land. "Last Light" is one of Scott's paintings that has been on display at the Winery. Since his inspiration comes from Tuscany, we felt it was the perfect label for the 2005 Sangiovese. Learn more about Scott and his art at www.sjstudio.com.