



THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

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2012 "BALLOONS OVER ALBUQUERQUE" PETITE SIRAH LIVERMORE VALLEY

HARVEST NOTES

The Livermore Valley, like many other Bordeaux-variety producing appellations in California, broke a three-year string of below average temperatures and above average rainfall to produce one of the finest vintages of the 2000s. With only ¼ of an inch of rain from July – October and only 10 days over 94 degrees in the same span, the long, temperate season yielded balanced, clean fruit from every block and vineyard from which we harvested. The overall quality of the vintage is spectacular.

WINEMAKER NOTES

The Collector's Circle features wines made from cultivars that are largely of Italian and Rhone origin. These wines are meant to be wines of distinction that are made to pair with food and be ready to drink younger than our Bordeaux-variety based wines. Started in 2003, the Collector's Circle has built a passionate audience for these small-lot wines usually made from fruit grown on our two estate vineyards Home Ranch and Ghielmetti. Balloons over Albuquerque is a blend of 76% Petite Sirah and 24% Grenache, both from the Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard. Each variety was vinified separately then blended about 6 months before the final blend was bottled. We did a number of blending trials before we concluded that the wild strawberry fruit and tannin of Grenache complemented the more brooding, richer-in-the-mid-palate Petite Sirah beautifully. The wine was aged in mostly older wood (French and American oak) for about 18 months.

TASTING NOTES

Despite the significantly higher average ripeness levels in 2012 compared to 2011, both the Petite Sirah and Grenache came in with Brix levels below 22°. More important than sugar levels, the seeds of these cultivars were ripe and acid and pH levels were in the desirable range. On first opening, the dark berry notes of Petite Sirah dominate the nose. Lurking slyly underneath, though, are the more red-fruit notes of wild strawberry typical of Grenache from Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard. Pleasingly, wood plays very little role in the aromatic composition of Balloons. On entry, the wine shows nice depth of flavor and round mouthfeel characteristic of a higher-alcohol wine. In the mid-palate the darker berry notes on entry, give way to the higher-toned Grenache fruit and the blend proceed flavorfully on a long acid-driven finish. The fruit of this wine is its most endearing quality and should be drunk in the near-term to preserve it. Think salmon or other flavorful fishes, pork, charcuterie and hard cheeses as an accompaniment to Balloons.

VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

76% Petite Sirah and 24% Grenache from Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard, blocks 12 and 7 respectively.

HARVEST DATA

October 10 - 30, 2012 | pH 3.61 | TA 0.69 | Alcohol 12.9%

FERMENTATION

Cold soaked for 5-7 days, individual fermenters inoculated with the D254, BRL-97, and Grenache yeast strains. Extended maceration of 14 days followed primary fermentation.

COOPERAGE

Aged for 18 months in mostly used French and American oak barrels.

CASES PRODUCED

117 cases

RELEASE DATE

September 6, 2014

ARTIST

"Balloons over Albuquerque" is a stained glass rendering of an original watercolor by Connie Weddell. The stained glass was given to her by her son Doug and grandkids Jeff & Jana, for Christmas 1983. Connie loved painting pictures of her home and surroundings in New Mexico.

