



THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

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“AMPHORA” 2017 SANGIOVESE LIVERMORE VALLEY



ARTIST

Ryan Kelder is a multi-media artist from Castro Valley, California. His work is built from the world we've created for ourselves in civilization. Every piece hunted and gathered from throughout society, Ryan takes the pieces of refuse to embellish and construct a meaning about society itself. The wood used for the piece, "Amphora," was discovered in Los Angeles County in 2014 where it was painted.

HARVEST NOTES

After a trio of very good to great vintages (2012-14) including what was the finest (2013) in more than 20 years of winemaking in the Livermore Valley, 2017 moved the bar even higher. The winter saw very significant rainfall with the arroyos at the base of the Ghielmetti Vineyard running with water for the first time since at least 2005 (Livermore recorded 14 inches of rain, an average year total in January through February alone; significantly, though, only .20 inches from July through October — Harvest time). Late August through October exhibited nearly perfect weather: temperate, practically no rainfall so that fruit came in with balanced ripeness and higher than average quantity from Ghielmetti Vineyard (~285 tons compared to the 5-year running average of 238 tons.)

WINEMAKER NOTES

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 but that shows an abundance of ripe, cherry-centric fruit. Compared to the Italian version, our wines are much rounder in the mouth, with plusher tannin. 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.

TASTING NOTES

Amphora was a product of the spectacular 2017 vintage. But with the brief interruption in perfect growing years with the challenging 2015 vintage, we would be working on our sixth straight perfect harvest. Though shy in the nose on opening with some aeration, Amphora show the characteristic aromas of red and black plum, subtle spice, and rich earth. Again, characteristic of Home Ranch Sangiovese, this wine shows wonderful poise on entry: a lovely combination of firm acidity and elegant fruit. In most vintages, acidity would be the lead voice from mid-palate to finish. Staying true to the overall "bigness" of the vintage, the 2017 release sings the bass notes of tannin — more significant here than perhaps any vintage before it. Acidity does play an organizing role on the very end of the wine, thrusting the fruit through the tannic astringency to highlight it once again. The overall effect of this structure is to create a serious wine that needs several years of bottle age to marry its muscular structure and substantial fruit.

VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

100% Sangiovese from the first of our estate vineyards: Home Ranch, located in the center of the 7-mile axis of the premier sites in the Livermore Valley.

HARVEST DATA

September 10, 2016 | pH 3.68 | TA .77 | Alcohol 15.0%

FERMENTATION

After destemming and crushing, the fruit was fermented in 1 ¾ ton open-topped fermenters. The wine was pressed off skins after about 10 days.

COOPERAGE

6 barrels: 50% new French, and 50% second-use and neutral for 12 months.

CASES PRODUCED

141 cases

RELEASE DATE

March 9, 2019