



2013 HOME RUN CUVÉE KICK RANCH VINEYARD, FOUNTAINGROVE

Vintage

I have worked sixteen vintages in my career, and I can say truthfully that 2013 has the potential to top them all. Only time will tell how these wines age in barrel and bottle, but at this point in time, we are in uncharted territory in terms of intensity, richness, and concentration of smooth, silky tannins. The winter of 2012 to 2013 was one of the driest on record. The late winter/spring cusp was warm, and the sap started flowing in the vines earlier than I have ever seen. Before the vines started bud-break, they were immediately stressed from the lack of water and nutrients available in the root zone. Frost-free and uniform bud-break was followed by warm spring weather during flowering, allowing for even fruit set. We were on track for the earliest vintage ever (3-6 weeks ahead of normal). Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days, cool nights, and minimal heat spikes, ideal for steady grape maturation. There were a few small rain events leading up to harvest, amounting to less than an inch of rain. It slowed the frantic pace, and helped to wash the dust off the clusters. Most blocks were harvested earlier than ever, and all the fruit had amazing natural acidity. The logistics of the season allowed all winemaking decisions to be made with optimum timing. This unique opportunity for stylistic integrity will showcase the best characteristics of the vintage and terroir of our vineyards.

Vineyard

Kick Ranch, owned by Dick Keenan, is a hillside vineyard located in Sonoma County's newest AVA, Fountaingrove. Its soil is Pleasanton-Haire complex that has been deposited in an alluvial fan surrounding natural runoff from the Mayacama mountains. Fantastic drainage has forced the plants to dig deep roots, naturally balancing the vines with low yields and concentrated fruit. With a straight shot through the Petaluma wind gap, the cool maritime breezes balance the intense afternoon exposure. This results in dark, ripe fruit with good acidity.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand harvested and arrived at the winery at dawn. Once received, the grapes were sprinkled with dry ice to keep cold and protected from oxidation. Syrah (20% whole-cluster) and Viognier grapes were gravity-fed to a stainless steel open top fermenter. A significant saignée was taken to concentrate the Syrah fruit before the Grenache was de-stemmed on top. Gentle pump-overs extracted the silky tannins quickly. The wine was aged without racking for 20 months in neutral French oak puncheons and barrels. The Hermitage and 470 Syrah clones bring layers of complexity to the blend. Co-fermentation with Viognier brings a floral nuance to the bouquet, and deep purple hue to the color via co-pigmentation. Extended aging in large format barrels has softened the wine, yet preserves the freshness that I like to showcase in this cuvée.

Tasting Notes

Violets, coriander seed, and wild blueberry aromas leap from the glass. Deep purple in color, the palate has soft texture, and silky tannins. Well-integrated acidity makes this wine a perfect match for smoked meats and wild game.

Reviews

Made from 70% Syrah and 30% Grenache, both grown at the terrific Kick Ranch hillside site, this wine has a robustness of dark cherry and a red-brick color, soft, smooth and youthful in its seamless tannin and oak. Juicy dark blueberry and a touch of meaty spice form an enviable combination just ready for meaty dishes.

91 points, VB, *Wine Enthusiast*, September 2016

Analysis

Harvested:	September 20 th and October 4 th , 2013
Composition:	70% Syrah, 30% Grenache
Alcohol:	14.9%
Bottling Date:	July 2015
Release Date:	September 2016
Production:	450 cases