

Blank Canvas

Blank Canvas Syrah 2014

TASTING NOTE Rich, powerful and brooding, the Blank Canvas Syrah is a world first for its inclusion of a unique co-fermentation partner, Gruner Veltliner. This marriage of varieties gives this wine a panoply of ripe fruit characters – black and red plum, boysenberry, alongside savoury notes, particularly bacon. It also gives this wine an incredible spectrum of spice: the black pepper and juniper of Syrah, and the white pepper notes of Gruner Veltliner. It has a velvet-like texture, fine tannins and acidity that only a cool-climate can deliver. It is incredibly dense and dark, yet hauntingly perfumed and elegant.

VINTAGE The 2014 vintage in Hawkes Bay was outstanding. It produced concentrated flavours, good acidities, and ripe fruit. It was an early vintage for most with a hot, dry summer and a cooperative autumn giving excellent ripening conditions across the region. The earlier than usual harvest meant that the majority of producers could dodge the rain event that occurred later on in April.

VITICULTURE A parcel of special Syrah fruit was sourced from a single vineyard run by a good friend in Hawkes Bay's famous Gimblett Gravels sub-region. The vineyard is over 15 years old with very low-yielding vines. The free-draining nature of the Gimblett Gravel soils with vineyards being situated on an historic riverbed facilitate this. The vines are VSP trained and cane-pruned on a single fruiting wire with high density planting.

WINEMAKING In an unprecedented approach Matt has co-fermented a select parcel of Syrah fruit with 7.5% Gruner Veltliner skins. This is a similar technique to what is done in Northern Rhone but with Austria's hallmark white variety instead of France's Viognier. Although we had Viognier available for this purpose, we specifically chose Gruner because we suspected it was a better partner. Viognier can have an over-sweet fruit character when it is very ripe which we wanted to avoid and the finished wine benefited from Gruner's white pepper note. We've used a 60% whole bunch component in the fermentation, the wine was hand-plunged and fermented by wild yeasts. Maturation of 10 months in new and seasoned French oak was carried out before the wine was blended and bottled unfiltered in March 2015.

FOOD MATCH The depth and intensity of this wine means it can be matched with equally rich, savoury foods such as hearty meat stews, grilled red meat and it is a divine match with peppered steak.

TECHNICAL ANALYSES

Alcohol	13 %	pH	3.76
Acidity	6.6 g/L	SO ₂	50 mg/L

ENDORSEMENTS:

95 Bob Campbell MW,
The Real Review.
18 Julia Harding MW,
JancisRobinson.com

