

2009 Syrah | Solomon Hills Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley

Special Bottling



Winemaker Adam Tolmach



Blend: 100% Syrah
Vineyard: Solomon Hills
AVA: Santa Maria Valley
Alcohol: 13.0%
Vinification: 20% New French Oak
Barrel Aging: 18 Months
Total Production: 70 Cases



Winemakers Notes

Since my days at UC Davis I have been in love with wines from the Rhone, and particularly the northern Rhone, where syrah is grown and made into wines from Côte-Rôtie, Hermitage, Saint Joseph, Crozes Hermitage and Cornas. In this neighborhood syrah is peppery, spicy, herbal and funky. It possesses a highly original aromatic profile that is balsamic, incense filled, cedary and has a cool fruitiness of cassis and currant. I cherish the memory of trekking down to Berkeley to visit Kermit Lynch's direct import store that specializes in Rhone and Burgundy and discovering exotically flavored gems.

So when the Miller family of Bien Nacido fame decided to plant an experimental half acre of syrah at their very cool Solomon Hills Vineyard I jumped at the opportunity to buy the grapes. The first crop in 2008 produced a ripe, delicious wine with lots of exotic spice, but the vintage that has taken me by surprise is the 2009. It was a very fine year, but there was a bit of rain at the end of the season so we were forced to pick the syrah less ripe than we usually do to avoid having the fruit rot. The result was a wine with a modest 12.9% alcohol and truly exotic aromas and flavors. The wine is full of fruit but not the least bit fruity: it is savory and delicious, and a bit reminiscent of those exotic northern Rhone wines I adore. in the most elegant way.

Press Reviews

Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Celler

"Opaque ruby. High-pitched aromas of red and dark berry preserves, potpourri and Asian spices, with a bright mineral overtone. Juicy, sharply focused black raspberry and bitter cherry flavors stain the palate but carry no excess weight. This is awfully slow to unfold but shows excellent balance. Finishes elegant and precise, with outstanding clarity and spicy persistence." - JR

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Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

"The 2009 Syrah Solomon Hills stands out from the rest of the Syrahs in the lineup for its soft, feminine personality. Crushed flowers and mint are woven together nicely in this understated, early drinking Syrah with Pinot-like overtones. Hints of black pepper, menthol and licorice are layered into the finish." - AG

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