

# 2011 Grenache | Sebastiano Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley



Winemaker  
Adam Tolmach



Blend: 100% Grenache  
Vineyard: Sebastiano  
AVA: Santa Ynez Valley  
Alcohol: 13.5%  
Vinification: 100% Neutral French Oak  
Barrel Aging: 14 Months  
Total Production: 142 Cases



## Winemaker's Notes

Winemakers tend to be crazy about Grenache and they can wax poetic about its many virtues endlessly. On the other hand I find most regular consumers know very little about the varietal, which is a pity because it is so deserving of a place at the table. There are a number of reasons why Grenache is mostly unknown in California, the primary one being that it is not widely planted in the state. Another seems to be that grenache isn't just one clear-cut wine like cabernet sauvignon tends to be—sometimes it's as strong and powerful as syrah and sometimes it's as delicate and nuanced as pinot noir—all depending on vineyard, climate and vintage. One unifying character in a great Grenache is its perfume. There is no red wine other than pinot that can express itself with so much fragrance. Another character is its unique tannins and texture; it is always chewy and savory in the most pleasant way.

My journey with Grenache began with Beckman Vineyard in 1998 and we made a Grenache, Mourvedre and syrah blend that we called Vin du Soleil—wine of the sun. These were interesting wines and many of them drink well today. But in 2003 I decided to focus more on grenache itself and started producing a wine labeled simple "Grenache". Frankly, neither the Vin du Soliel or the grenache were received with great enthusiasm by the critics, but we liked them.

And then in 2010 we started purchasing Grenache from John Sebastiano Vineyard, a new cool spot with close planted vines on steep hillsides near Santa Rita Hills in northern Santa Barbara County. This vineyard was a real revelation, we no longer had to search for an ethereal Grenache-ness, the fruit was so intense here it clobbered us on the head! Unlike other vineyards the fruit from Sebastiano bursts with freshness and acidity. And because it is planted in such a cool and windy spot the grenache doesn't ripen until November, and that extra time on the vine gives us fruit with extraordinary color, aromatics and spice.

A concentrated raspberry aroma assaults the senses when you pour this 2011 in the glass. And beyond the fruit (which seems to evolve from the initial raspberry into Persian mulberry) there are layers of earthy, forest-y characters that bring complexity to this stunning wine. The flavors are bold, racy and tannic and at this point the wine matches best with rich fatty foods: standing rib roast, anyone?

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