

2016 SYRAH

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

737 CASES PRODUCED

Syrah, of all the grapes I've worked with over 35 years, remains my biggest obsession and our flagship wine at The Ojai Vineyard. That said, after many years it remains a misunderstood grape in California; many people aren't sure whether to expect something jammy, thick and sweet or something peppery, savory and lively.

The cool, often foggy climate of northern Santa Barbara County turns out to be one of the most ideal places to grow syrah anywhere outside of the northern Rhone Valley in France (which is where I take my cues with this grape). Here we have three valleys that run East-West and are open to the cold Pacific Ocean, so they feed brisk coastal breezes inland and syrah ripens gradually. Instead of thick, jammy fruitiness that syrah shows from warm vineyards, here you get that mysteriously earthy, exotic and spicy side of the varietal.

2016 was the year that finally broke the pattern of warm, inland influenced drought weather. In this wine, Syrah grown on steep wind-blasted slopes at John Sebastiano provides loads of gamey tobacco flavor, and pepper galore! For some textural power we blended in a bit of warmer-climate Syrah from Roll Ranch and a touch of Grenache from John Sebastiano. This blend offers a cross-section of everything I love about syrah: great earthy fragrance, savory fruit, and a mid-weight feel that is quenching and delicious with a fine meal.

BLEND 75% Syrah & 22% Grenache & 3% Sangiovese

VINEYARDS 72% John Sebastiano & 25% Roll Ranch & 3% White Hawk

ALCOHOL 13%

VINIFICATION 100% Neutral French Oak

BARREL AGING 11 Months

PRESS REVIEWS

Jeb Dunnuck

"I loved the 2016 Syrah Santa Barbara County, a wine to buy by the case. Elegant, perfumed notes of blue fruits, peppery herbs, violets, and a touch of minerality all give way to a rounded, fruit-forward, fleshy beauty that's geared for drinking over the coming 4-5 years." Jeb Dunnuck **92 Points**

Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"The 2016 Syrah (Santa Barbara County) is a delicious entry-level wine from Ojai. Fresh and light on its feet, the 2016 is beautifully nuanced from start to finish. A drop (10%) of Grenache rounds out the blend. All the elements fall into place in this overachieving wine from Ojai. The 16.5% whole clusters are mostly felt in the wine's mid-weight structure rather than in the flavor profile. Vineyard sources are Roll Ranch, Bien Nacido and John Sebastiano." - AG **91 Points**

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