



Wattle Creek 2012 Shiraz Alexander Valley, Sonoma County

Winemaker notes

This Shiraz displays how interesting this varietal can be when it is grown in regions with plenty of warmth and sunshine. Immediately present are a mix of aromas of huckleberry, wild berry and dried prunes that are vivid and impacting. There are also fresh, pure notes of rich blackberry, complimented by notes of toast, smoke, white pepper, vanilla bean and a touch of bacon fat. The fruit core always remains strongly in the forefront of this wine, with other aromas in the background. The rich, chewy-berry and smoked berry fruit flavors carry effortlessly through to the ending with a mix of sweet, dark fruit swirling together in a plump, juicy, fresh finish.

Vintage & Winemaking

The 2012 Vintage was a fairly average harvest in California in terms of bud break, flowering , and fruit-set through verasion (where the berries soften and change color). The vines set a large crop, so we had to drop fruit off each vine to suppress yields and thus keep the quality high! As it turned out, the 2012 vintage was the largest grape harvest California has ever known. All varietals had record or near record yields last year. Despite the copious fruit, the fruit thinning help keep the overall quality of the fruit high across the board.

Mother Nature cooperated weather-wise, and we sailed from verasion to harvest almost unscathed. There was a late arriving storm that passed though wine country the final 2 weeks of harvest, this forced everyone's hand, and they had to pick the remaining fruit. Growers and Wineries alike were not taking a lot of chances after the rain packed '10 and '11 vintages and most opted to pick their remaining fruit.

Despite all of these challenges, we were able to keep Mother Nature at bay and produce some fabulous fruit from our estate properties. We waited until the fruit was at the peak of ripeness and harvested each block of Shiraz individually by hand into picking bins at night in an effort to preserve the delicate flavors. The fruit was received in the cellar before the sun came up, where the grapes were de-stemmed only and not crushed into small open top fermenters.

The grapes were fermented warm and the tanks were pumped over 2-3 times a day for color and tannin extraction. The wines were gently drained from their skins and the balance of juice trapped in the skins was lightly pressed away. The resulting individual lots of Shiraz were aged separately and blended just before bottling. We put the free run wine (drained out of the fermenter and not pressed with the grapes) to a majority all French Oak Barrels. This Shiraz aged for 16 months in barrel before bottling.

Appellation:	Alexander Valley - Wattle Creek Estate
Variety/Blend:	Shiraz 100%
Vintage:	2012
Oak Maturation:	16 months
New Oak:	40 %
French oak:	100%
Alcohol:	14.5%
Production:	400 cases

