

Deerfield

2003 Syrah

Ladi's Vineyard
Sonoma County

The Vineyard: Ladi Danielik comes from several generations of grape growers in the Czech Republic, where grapes have been grown and wine made for thousands of years. Ladi's been growing grapes for 25 years on the western slopes of the Mayacamus Mountains in Sonoma County. He's been named the best grower in Sonoma five times at our annual wine competition. Ladi is a master; his experience and care show in the wine.

The Vintage: The winter of 2003 was colder than normal creating a deeper dormancy in the vines resulted in fewer but larger bunches. The summer was mild until very late in the season, providing long ripening with a boost at the end. We're proactive in predicting vintage trends and worked closely with Ladi to maximize the seasonal contributions. We were rewarded with perfect fruit. All the '03s are nicely balanced, show good extraction of flavors and are elegantly balanced.

The Winemaking: We harvested by hand in small bins so as not to crush the grapes on the way to the winery. We hand sorted the bunches, removing anything that wasn't perfect. We started the fermentation on native yeast to maximize the influence of the vineyard, and then inoculated with a pure strain to highlight the nature of the grape. Fermentation was done in open topped fermenters punched by hand. Small lots were segregated, allowing us to use unique protocols of separate batches, ultimately adding to the complexity of the whole. The pressing was gentle and long, controlled by our state-of-the-art computer operated press. Barrels from several coopers were selected for their affinity to Syrah. Aging was extended for almost three years to fully develop the more subtle nuances of the wine. The wine was made cleanly assuring very low levels of histamines and sulfites assuring no red wine headaches or allergic reactions.

Tasting Notes: This is a Syrah in the Rhone style of central France, not the Shiraz style of Australia, which is made more like Cabernets. This wine features the fruit, and the terroir (the earth and sense of place). The nose conjures up blackberry pie. The color is so deep it belies its brilliance. Strong legs promise weight and viscosity. All promises are kept. Take a good sip and the flavor encompasses the center of your palate with a full, immediate bloom. It then disperses without dissipation to all corners of your experience never losing a beat, never out of focus, never diminished only redefined. The first word is delicious. Second is the realization that nothing is left out, every corner affected. Think it's good by itself? Try it with some grilled food, meat, fish, salmon, or veggies; it will pair with each. If it's got a little char on it the pairing will be perfect.

Winemaking Data: Winemaker: Robert Rex
Picked: September 30, 2003. Brix 26.5°. Acid 7.7g/L. 3.76 pH.
Barrel aged 34 months in 65% French, 35% American oak, 35% new.
Bottled Sept. 2006. Alcohol 15.2%. R.S. 0.15%.
SO₂ at bottling 22ppm, SO₂ at release < 8ppm.
Released March 1, 2008. 390 cases produced

