



# 2022 SYRAH PRIMA DONNA

## TASTING NOTES

The Prima Donna approaches carrying a tray of caramelized treats, including toffee and marshmallows. But then as you continue chatting, you notice she's also very suave and colorful, with a smooth demeanor full of plums. She's clearly got a spicy backstory, though, one colored with eucalyptus, allspice and orange rind. Not your usual restrained Syrah, she's full of excitement. Smooth/full-bodied; medium body, medium acid, medium tannins. Brighter, redder fruit than a typical Syrah, spicy notes from VI. Toasty notes from oak.

## WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Cofermenting Syrah with Viognier is a traditional practice in southern France that has been adopted by many new world winemakers. "Cofermentation" sounds fancy but it just means fermenting grapes of multiple varieties together in one vat. We add the crushed, destemmed Viognier grapes directly to the fermentor with the Syrah, which makes for a dramatic visual as well as a dramatic wine. Including the skins of the Viognier in the fermentation brings some additional tannin to the party and adds some aromatics and flavors that you just won't find in straight varietal Syrah. The remarkable thing about this wine is that it takes traditional cofermentation and turns it up to 11, with 11% of the grapes being Viognier instead of the more-common 1-3%.

### Composition

89% Syrah & 11% Viognier

### Appellation

Rattlesnake Hills (but labeled with the inclusive Yakima Valley appellation)

### Vineyard

Syrah from Elephant Mountain Vineyard, Viognier from Sugarloaf Vineyard

### Crush Pad

Destem and light crush

### Saignee

17.5%

### Yeast

D254

### Fermentation

Small open-top fermentors, punched down by hand

### Time on skins

15 days

### Aging

16 months in barrels

### Oak

10%

### Fining/Filtration

Cross-flow filtration

### Alcohol

14.5%

### Production

243 cases

### Bottled

February 7, 2024



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## PAIRINGS

Pair this cheeky wine with pork anything (add in a cherry reduction for some fancy), kale lasagna or Cubano sandwiches. Or, fire up the grill! Prima Donna likes drama, so get a nice char going on those veggies and serve with spareribs or other barbecue. When you are at the winery, try it with some of our smoked salmon, blue cheese, or chocolate. Also great at intermission at the opera (after sneaking it in in a flask). ;)

## VINTAGE DETAILS

2022 was a very unusual vintage in Washington state. Conditions started to warm relatively early in the spring, leading to fears of frost damage, but then it cooled off a bit...and stayed cooled off through May and into a chilly Juneuary. Flowering (which is the event that really kicks off the grape timing) was 2-3 weeks behind average, which meant that harvest would be too. Summer temps were relatively even, with a short heat spike in August. It has been quite a while since we didn't harvest any grapes until September, and this year we didn't pick until the end of the first week, on September 7, and our next grapes were not until the 12th. Not only did harvest start late, ripening progressed slowly. The whole vintage was saved by unusually warm and dry conditions through September into October that facilitated beautiful ripening. In terms of the effects on the grapes, the vintage was terrific for our style of moderate alcohol, firm acidity, and just-ripe flavors. Acids were a little higher than usual in some of the whites, which is a delight.

## GRAPE VARIETY INFO

Syrah is a lower-tannin, high color red variety, and tannin helps stabilize color, so some have theorized that cofermenting Syrah with Viognier (which has no red color but some tannin) might help stabilize some of that color. This may be true, but adding the colorless Viognier juice tends to dilute the effect (back to normal color levels ;-). The historical reason for cofermenting the two likely has more to do with adding a little lift to cool-climate Syrah from its native France.

## AWARDS

Silver, SavorNW Wine Awards (85 points)

## FUN FACTS

Since different varieties ripen at different times, and the same variety grown in different locations (even just a few miles apart) will ripen differently, one of the challenges of making this wine is getting the Syrah and Viognier together in the fermentors.



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