



2022 SYRAH

TASTING NOTES

The 2022 vintage was much cooler than usual, so while Elephant Mountain is typically a warm climate, this Syrah tastes a bit more like a cool-climate version. This precocious wine has a full aroma, with non-fruit notes of toast and earth as present as the plum fruit. It is full bodied in the mouth as well, with lots of red plum and some... cherry saltwater taffy? Hey, no candy in class, mister! Typically our Syrah is fairly mature by the time it gets to the bottle, but this wine feels like it will continue to develop significantly over the coming year. Stay tuned! Dry, full-bodied; medium tannin, medium-minus acid.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Syrah could well be Washington State's claim to wine fame someday, if it can emerge from the shadow of Big Three dominance (Cabernet, Chardonnay, Merlot). The climate is perfect for it, similar to France's Rhone. The main problem it faces is style confusion: Syrah is made in such a variety of styles, from utterly jam-tastic to tough-as-leather, that you almost never know what you're going to get in a bottle until after you've pulled the cork – and waited several hours. Elephant Mountain is the highest elevation site in Yakima Valley, and the combination of wind, heat, and air drainage make it a fantastic place to grow Syrah.

Composition

100% Syrah from Elephant Mountain Vineyard

Appellation

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

Harvest Date

September 29, 2022

Harvest specs

23.6 brix, pH 3.47, TA 8.1 g/l

Crush Pad

Destem and light crush

Saignee

None

Yeast

D254

Fermentation

Small open-top fermentors, punched down by hand

Time on Skins

14 days

Aging

16 months in barrels

Oak

19%

Fining/Filtration

Unfined / cross flow filtration

Alcohol

14.5%

Production

186 cases

Bottled

February 7, 2024



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PAIRINGS

Syrah is your solution for salmon. The oily, flavorful fish can overwhelm anything less robust. Or pair it with a veggie lasagna, chili and cornbread, brisket, beef, lamb or bison burgers, filet mignon, grilled peppers with feta, or some favorite cheese, especially aged cheddar or manchego. Also goes great with an evening of gossip with some of your spiciest friends.

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 the sixth most planted variety globally, with a little more than half the acreage that Cab Sauv has. It originated in the Rhone valley in France, where it is still a primary variety today. The grapes have very dark color, but lower-than-average tannin. It can ripen in a wide range of climates, from hot (e.g. CA and Australia) to medium (France) to cool (Chelan). As a result, it is made in a correspondingly wide range of styles, making the statement "I don't like Syrah" one that begs the question "what style?"

FUN FACTS

Syrah has inherent smokiness to it so we use less new oak on it (half what other varieties get). It is one of the four varieties that Matt first started working with when he started the winery. In Australia it is called Shiraz, possibly because the ships carrying vine cuttings from France stopped over in the Pakistani port city of Shiraz and had their cargo stamped accordingly.



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