

KIVEL STADT CELLARS

2016 KC Labs Syrah

Overview:

Years ago, Kivelstadt Cellars was only an idea: the idea that people deserve to drink wines with soul. These wines would come from vineyards with heritage, farmed with the utmost respect for nature, and fermented with low intervention. A combination of these ideals has evolved into a lifestyle. A lifestyle which, vintage after vintage, results in delicious wines which pay homage to California's terroir.

KC Labs is the newest addition to our portfolio. When we have an opportunity that we can't pass up, we always take it. Sometimes that opportunity will only be a single vintage wine, sometimes more. KC Labs is our playground. We experiment with grapes, styles, fermentation, aging and much more. Thinking outside the box makes us better producers. The consumer is the lucky beneficiary of our experimentation. We always guarantee that the KC Labs wines will receive the same amount of love as our other projects and, luckily for you, the price will be a little lower!

Syrah is obviously a cornerstone of Kivelstadt Cellars portfolio. We made our name based on our Syrah produced from the Kivelstadt estate vineyard, which is one of the most refined Syrahs you'll ever taste. The KC Labs Syrah on the other hand is the fun teenager who one day might develop that refinement. He's energetic, fun and always ready to start the party!

Varieties:

Syrah (100%)

Production:

149 cases

Vineyards:

Venturi Vineyard, Mendocino County AVA

Grape Details:

Syrah's most famous home is in the vineyards of the northern Rhone. For those of you who really want to dork out, it was recently discovered that Syrah is a cross between Mondeuse Blanche (a grape indigenous to Savoie that's famous for its pepper character) and Dureza (some variety I've never heard of, but is related to Toroldego). Syrah is a famously vigorous variety, which ripens quickly and shortly after veraison. This makes harvest decision and farming especially important for Syrah growers, as the wines can go from underripe to overripe in a blink of an eye. Also, next time you're in a Syrah vineyard, check out the leaves. Syrah is famous for an extremely large middle lobe (the one that is parallel to the leaf's stem).

Soils:

Venturi Vineyard is located just north of Ukiah, in the Calpella Valley, on predominantly Pinole gravelly loam soils. Containing a mixture of sandstone, shale and quartz, these deep, well-drained soils were formed from alluvial flows, depositing fist-sized stones along the way. Highly deficient in organic matter, the moderately acidic soil pH allows for optimal nutrient uptake to allow the vines to thrive. Pinole soils are some of the most sought-after soil types in Mendocino County.

Farming:

Larry Venturi is a third generation farmer tending to vines planted on his family's historic site in Calpella in Mendocino County. Planted in the late 1940's, this nearly 70-year-old vineyard is still amazingly healthy and productive, with much more life to go. The Syrah vines are about 25 years old and are some of the only vines that are trellised using the vertical shoot positioning (VSP) method. VSP provides the vines with more structure than head training and will protect the Syrah from wind damage. The vines have been dry farmed since inception. Farming is certified organic.

Vintage:

The 2016 vintage was another in a string of very hot vintages. This was tempered by very heavy rainfall in the autumn. This was a great relief from the multi year drought that California vines had been struggling against. A cooler than average August allowed for steady ripening.

Vinification:

We told you this was an experimental wine and we've got the fermentation protocol to prove it! This wine was all picked the same day and fermented three different ways. The first third was fermented whole cluster, the second third was 50 percent whole cluster and the last third was destemmed. This gives the wine a combination bit of 3 different worlds. The wine was fermented without the addition of yeast or malolactic bacteria and was aged in neutral barrel for 10 months prior to bottling.

Tasting Notes:

This wine combines many different sides of Syrah. Each of the fermentation styles discussed above lead to three distinct styles of wine, but the beauty is we blended them together for you! The whole cluster gives the rustic edge that much traditional northern Rhone Syrah exhibits. The destemmed gives more high-toned fruit and soft subtle tannin. The 50 percent whole cluster lands right in the middle. In the end, we got a complex wine that is light and easy drinking with a serious backbone.

Analysis:

EtOH: 13.4%
pH: 3.60
TA: 5.9g/L
VA: .76
ML: 100%