

Rara Avis

2015 | COLUMBIA VALLEY



57% Grenache Olsen Ranch Vineyard
18% Grenache Upland Vineyard
21% Mourvèdre Wallula Vineyard
4% Syrah Dutchman Vineyard

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

pH: 4.03

TA: 4.3 g/liter

RS: <0.2 g/liter

14.5% Alcohol

292 cases produced



Harvest and Winemaking

2015 was the hottest vintage in Washington history. The heat was relentless from June through October. Fortunately, the heat was consistent and not a continuous series of 100°F spikes. Most of our vineyards were harvested 3 weeks earlier than usual and at higher levels of grape clusters per vine than we have ever experienced. The result is wines with richness in the midpallet and lower acidity than normal for Washington wines.

The Olsen Ranch Grenache was harvested on September 20, Wallula Mourvèdre on September 24, Dutchman Syrah on September 29 and the Upland Vineyard Grenache was picked September 30. All the grapes were hand harvested, hand sorted, and fermented by yeasts native to the vineyards. The Grenache and Mourvèdre had 10% whole clusters added back to the fermentation and the Syrah had 50% whole clusters added to the fermentation. Only the free run wine was retained for the Rara Avis.

The Grenache was aged in four French Oak 500 liter puncheons (second and third fill). The Mourvèdre and Syrah were aged in relatively neutral French Oak Burgundy barrels. The blend was put together in December 2016 and bottled in February 2017.

Tasting

The Rara Avis has the typical Grenache hues of medium red with hints of orange. The ar-

oma has notes of crushed granite, wet stones, pomegranate, and cranberry. The palette is mouth coating with delicious and savory red fruits and a rocky/funky character. The tone of the Rara Avis is pleasing, interesting, intriguing, and plush. It is a wine that makes you think, analyze, and ultimately love.

Thoughts on Grenache

Grenache is the great grape of Spain and Southern France and is the world's number one planted vine. The vine produces a hearty wine with higher alcohol and lower acidity and seems to thrive in the Goldilocks regions of Washington (not too hot in Summer, not too cold in Winter, and just right in the Fall). In Southern France Grenache is blended with Mourvèdre and a myriad of obscure red grapes few can remember. Down Under Grenache is part of the GSM (Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre) blend. Interestingly in Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape Syrah is not allowed to be blended into the Grenache blends of the region.

Grenache is a lighter wine and sensitive to oxygen exposure. It is a natural blending partner with Mourvèdre because of Mourvèdre's reductive nature and higher tannin level. Our preference is only for a minimal amount of Syrah in our Grenache blend. We find too much Syrah upsets the balance of the Grenache and the resulting blend loses "typicity".

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