

LARSON FAMILY WINERY



Our style of Syrah...

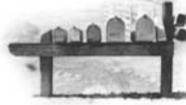
“In California I see two different kinds of Syrah. One is really heavy weight, high alcohol, well extracted, big tannins. It’s more a masculine style. Then also you will see Syrah from a cool region which is a little more similar to Pinot Noir. Of course, it’s not the same at all, but they’re both nicely structured. You’ll see a more transparent tannin structure; soft, acid-driven, fruity, Syrah. So for us because we are here in Carneros, and actually this Syrah we grow in Paradise Vineyards, fifteen minutes Southwest from Larson. If you’re familiar with the Sonoma Raceway, the vineyards are right across from there Sonoma Raceway. So it’s right by the San Pablo Bay where cool wind comes in and there’s also soil clay. This particular vineyard sits on a slope so it has really nice drainage capacity as well. We see really small berries which means very intense flavors. But it’s a cool region so my goal is to make a Syrah that is more balanced with elegance instead of high extracted, heavy, high-alcohol Syrah. So to achieve that it’s very important to pick at the right time so it’s not too overripe. Normally when you pick the grapes you’re supposed to have a two-week window. If you pick too early your wine becomes fresher, more acidic, less alcoholic. If you pick two-weeks later you have more sugar, ripe characteristics, like raisin characteristics sometimes, and more tannins as well. So for this Syrah we try to pick and the particular, right time when the grapes are still fresh and vibrant.”

Winemaking

“When it comes to winemaking I always try to use the open tops which is exclusively, normally used for the Pinot Noir, but we also make the Syrah in an open top. Open top allows us to control the cap management. Cap management refers to how much of the tannins you want to extract from the skin. So open top has open access to the cap so you have more flexibility to control the tannin structure. So I ferment the Syrah a touch lower temperature. Normally we use 80-90 degrees for Bordeaux varietals (cabernet, merlot, etc.) to ferment so it really expresses big fruit characteristics. When you ferment those same fruits even at a little lower of a temperature it’s not as open as the wine with the higher temperature, it really retains the nice fruit characteristics. So for this Syrah we normally ferment at 80 degrees in order to respect the nice and natural fruit characteristics instead of the tannins. So that’s how we make the Syrah so hopefully you enjoy!”

“We drink what we can, and sell the rest!”

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Characteristics

"The characteristics to me for Syrah are some of the darker berries, I always try to look for the berries in the red wines. So for this Syrah I can find dark cherry, blueberry, and a hint of blackberry. Also, the Syrah tends to have a little more of the meaty, or red meat nose. To me that's a characteristic of the varietal.

It also has a natural spice as well. Syrah from everywhere tends to have the black pepper and clove. Clove may tend to come more from the oak, but the black pepper is more a characteristic of the varietal; of the grape."

- Winemaker, Nori Nakamura

"We drink what we can, and sell the rest!"

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