



2015 St. Laurent Carneros

This grape has very tight clusters and does poorly in humid climates like France, preferring high altitude where dry air and high UV suppress mold. It is widely planted in Austria and is the principal red grape of the Czech Republic, where it is known by its German name, Sankt Laurent. It matures very early, near the martyrdom date of Saint Lawrence of Rome, who was executed by Emperor Valerian on August 10 of the year 258 AD. This early harvest date is ideal for the short seasons of cool continental climates, resulting in low alcohol. 2014 was a cold year, so there is more acidity and palate life here than the previous vintage, and the nose is brighter.

The addition of well-seasoned French oak in the fermenter helps extract and stabilize color and provides whiskey lactone, an aromatic lifting element.

It really is like no other wine. You will find extremely dense, soft tannins supporting generous mulberry fruit which you might easily mistake for Gamay Noir except for its lingering basil aftertaste that reminds me of Carmenère. There is no better example of the postmodern winemaking principle of aromatic integration. The wine is actually full of pyrazines, yet does not smell like bell pepper, and only expresses them in the character of sort of Eastern European personality: generous and friendly but slightly cynical.

As a result, the wine is more complex and intriguing than a simple picnic wine, but is certainly suitable for an outing in some summer meadow with a basket full of chicken and three-bean salad. Its tannins have no edge at all, so it handles considerable acidity with grace, equally at home with lean flank steak, paella, sushi, venison and quail and is magic with my Swedish meatballs, doused in a morel / porcini cream sauce with a dash of Marsala.

My goal is to produce skillfully crafted wines that explore winemaking possibilities beyond the contemporary mainstream.

Clark Smith, Winemaker

Vineyard Location: Dale Ricci Vineyard
Sonoma Carneros
5th leaf of experimental planting

Harvest Date: 26 August 2015

Harvest Sugar: 20.7 Brix

Fermentation techniques:
100% crush/destem
Anchor VN112 yeast inoculum
7 gm/L untoasted Alliers chips, air seasoned 2 yrs

Elevage details:
Malolactic fermentation in barrel
Neutral French oak aged 27 months
TA 6.7 g/L, pH 3.73 at bottling
Alcohol 11.8%

198 cases produced.

For more details, visit www.winesmithwines.com