

The Great Places

SYRAH

BALLARD CANYON AVA

2018

August James Stolpman

VINEYARD COMPONENTS

6,000 vine/acre own-rooted head-pruned pre-clonal
GREAT PLACES August James Block Syrah

GRAPE VARIETY

100% pre-clonal Syrah

TONNAGE

1.5 tons

ALCOHOL

14%

VINIFICATION FACTS

100% de-stemmed. native fermentation without sulfur
addition in stainless steel

COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE

22 months in 1 neutral French oak 500L puncheon, 1
neutral French oak 330 liter cigar

HARVEST DATE

October 8th

TOTAL PRODUCTION

75 cases

SENSORY

Upon popping the cork, August James shows off a concentration that can be smelled across the room – a blockbuster of blue and black fruit that is immediately backed up by a mouth-filling, soft, coating texture that lasts through a fine chalk tannin profile. Within 10 minutes that girth of body takes over the tannin to extend the voluptuous body with a splash of lively underlying energy.

BACKGROUND

In early 2013, after a seminal visit to Domaine Auguste Clape, we set out to model a vineyard after Clape's Reynard parcel. We propagated special pre-clonal Syrah cuttings from just 49 vines to 12,000, all head-pruned, own-rooted, and planted so densely that all work must be done by hand. The steep, east-facing hillside produced its first crop, barely 400 pounds of fruit, in 2017, the same year our son August was born. In 2018 we harvested 1.5 tons of fruit for the first 75 case release.

GREAT PLACES SYRAH

Syrachs that make the cut into our highest tier "The Great Places" come from just 8 acres of our steepest hillsides where we have taken an approach unprecedented in the New World. First, the pre-clonal strains are wholly unique and selected from 100 year old vineyard sites. Then, this Syrah material is planted own-rooted and head pruned at just 2.5 x 3 feet spacing. Each vine puts all of its energy into ripening 2-3 clusters of concentrated, complex fruit each year. All work is done by hand.

The brand is named after one of favorite Serine parcels in Cote-Rotie "Les Grandes Places".

VINTAGE

In 2018, we were blessed with even, moderate weather in the late summer and through harvest. Almost every other year in Santa Barbara County, we must strategize around accelerating sugar accumulation and weakening vines caused by typical August or September heat events. Without extreme heat, 2018 allowed for depth, concentration, and amazing phenolic ripeness. The vintage continued the pattern established in 2012, with even numbered vintages delivering yummy, hedonistic wines ready to be enjoyed now or aged. Odd numbered vintages since 2011 seem to be brighter and more energetic.