

STOLPMAN VINEYARDS

BALLARD CANYON

HAIR OF THE BEAR 2016

TECH

VINEYARD COMPONENTS

Block 1 Petite Sirah, Block 3 Roussanne

VARIETAL BLEND

75% Petite Sirah, 25% Roussanne
(cofermented)

VINIFICATION

De-stemmed, foot trod, and pumped over twice
daily through Native fermentation, no sulfur
added through fermentation

FINAL ANALYSIS

alcohol: 15.2%

VATTING/FERMENTATION

Concrete open top fermentation

COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE

67% Neutral, 33% New French Oak Barrels

RELEASE DATE

October 2018

HARVEST DATE

October 4, 2016 (Petite Sirah),
October 5, 2016 (Roussanne)

TOTAL PRODUCTION

160 cases

NOTES

BACKGROUND

We've bottled wine from the 3.5 acre, 1992 planting of Petite Sirah on a few occasions recently. In 2016, winemaker Kyle Knapp had the brilliant idea of co-fermenting the powerful, black, often tannic grape with soft, rich, and cushioning Roussanne.

We harvested 3 tons of Petite Sirah, destemmed it and filled the majority of one of our cubic open top concrete fermenters. The next day, we selected one ton of Roussanne and poured the golden fruit on top of the black Petite Sirah grapes.

During fermentation, the Roussanne polished the raw power of the Petite Sirah into a voluptuously luxurious bottle of wine.

In recognition of the winemaker's triumphant wine, local artist Eric Beltz drew a rugged, older version of Kyle Knapp emerging from the wilderness with a domesticated bear by his side. A parallel to Roussanne taming the wild Petite Sirah.

The term "Hair of the Bear" described a top-notch frontiersman or trapper back in the days of the Wild West.

VINTAGE

Petite Sirah ripened well after the two September 2016 heat spikes, allowing time for the slow development of densely concentrated flavors and texture.

The weaker Roussanne vines were slower to accumulate sugar in 2016 due to the 5th year of the 2012-2016 drought. Because of this, the Roussanne dialed back the potential alcohol of the ripe Petite Sirah – although the wine still weighs in at a whopping 15.2%.

AT THE WINERY

Ballard Canyon Petite Sirah presents a tight rope in picking decisions. If picked too early, the grape can smack the palate with coarse tannin, but potential alcohol can soar beyond any semblance of balance if one waits for the tannins to melt.

Lower-Alcohol Roussanne gives Kyle Knapp the ability to wait for the Petite Sirah to fully ripen, while keeping the finished alcohol level in check.

SENSORY

Perhaps the most broadly appealing, hedonistic wine we have made since the huge, opulent 2008 vintage. Hair of the Bear 2016 comes forward with muddled blackberries freshly picked from the wild bramble. The supple fruit profile, kissed with mint leaves, creates a rich and pleasant mouthfeel smothering the wine's raw power.