

STOLPMAN

≠ Estate, So Fresh, Combe ≠

LA CROCE 2018

TECH

VINEYARD COMPONENTS

Block A Hilltop Sangiovese (Rodino Clone) and
Block A Hillside Syrah (Alban Clone) – both High
Density 2,400 vine/acre

VARIETAL BLEND

50% Syrah + 50% Sangiovese
(by weight)

VINIFICATION

Co-fermented together, destemmed; no sulfur
added through fermentation

FINAL ANALYSIS

alcohol: 14.1%

VATTING/FERMENTATION

Open top Concrete Fermenting tanks for 21
days

COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE

Neutral French 500L oak Puncheons for 16
months

RELEASE DATE

October 2020

HARVEST DATE

October 12 2018

TOTAL PRODUCTION

460 cases

BACKGROUND

When consultant Alberto Antonini first came to the vineyard in January of 2001, he was shocked to hear that year in and year out, we enjoy the coincidence of Syrah and Sangiovese ripening together. Alberto had dreamt of such a parallel his entire career in Italy. More specifically, he thought co-fermenting red-hued, high-strung Sangiovese with dark, savory Syrah would create the benchmark for all Super Tuscan blends to follow. But in Italy, Alberto found that Syrah ripened a month ahead of Sangiovese, rendering his dream impossible – until he arrived in Ballard Canyon.

We prefer to co-ferment grapes rather than blending finished wine because the elements of each varietal integrate together through the process of fermentation. Primary flavor traits develop during the first portion of fermentation, and if that development happens with varietals already combined, the wine will be markedly different than trying to blend separate lots later. Of course, the reason few modern winemakers employ co-fermentation is the inherent lack of control.

Alberto turned out to be right. After our first stab at co-fermenting Sangiovese and Syrah in 2001, we were hooked. In 2004 we planted high-density Sangiovese along a ridgeline surrounded on either side with Syrah – and every year, we harvest the hill together, making sure the ratio remains 50% Sangiovese grapes and 50% Syrah into each fermenting tank.

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.

AT THE WINERY

With our vision set on a smooth, decadent La Croce wine – we destemmed both the Syrah and Sangiovese fruit to round-out the structure and mitigate harder mid-palate components. We patiently guided the co-fermentation towards its revered complexity through gentle extraction and gradual temperature increases.

SENSORY

Certainly a stand-out vintage of La Croce representative of the hedonistic 2018 vintage. A perfect marriage of Syrah depth and ripeness with the bright acidity of Sangiovese bringing a pinpoint balance to the finish. Immediately after decanting the Sangiovese takes the lead with high-toned red fruit that envelops the fine dusty mocha tannin and spice on the finish.