



## 2006 Stolpman Hilltops Syrah

Hilltops Syrah originates from our best vineyard blocks – both newer ones, planted to high density and massal selections and our oldest vineyards, now coming into their 17<sup>th</sup> year. The Hilltops Syrah is produced from vines located along the ridges of limestone hills or on the steepest hillsides where we get our most concentrated and best balanced grapes. In these areas, only a thin layer of topsoil lies above well-drained limestone, forcing the vines to struggle to survive in their constant quest to find water and nutrients. The older vines are not irrigated, further reducing the vigor of the plants and the size of each year's crop. Hilltops Syrah exhibits great depth in flavor from these small, dehydrated grapes.

Starting with the 2004 vintage, we age the Hilltops Syrah on the l'Avion (Roussanne) lees for the final six months of its elevage. This technique protects the wine from oxidation, keeping the wine fresh and minimizing our use of sulfur dioxide. The extended elevage on the Roussanne lees also adds aromatic complexity and greater suppleness in the mouth.

Use of Roussanne Lees in the barrel-aging of Syrah creates a more approachable wine when young. Due to the flavor concentration and use of new French Oak, the Syrah by itself is not ready to drink until 5-6 years after bottling. However, the white grape particles lend a seductive feminine and perfumed element on the periphery of the nose and palate. When Moorman decided to employ Roussanne Lees, the winery was not aware of any other wines in the world using this method. The Stolpmans credit Moorman's past career as a Chef for his creativity in finding new expressions of the ingredients in the vineyard.

The Roussanne character will integrate into the wine as it ages. The balance of older vine fruit and young vine syrah from our new high density vineyards produces a wine of great complexity and richness, while maintaining a balance of fruit, acidity, tannin and alcohol that give this wine great aging potential.

Stolpman Vineyards is dedicated to Rhone Varietals and Syrah in Particular. About 2/3 of the 150 acre vineyard is planted to Syrah. Hilltops represents Stolpman's "reserve-quality Syrah".

Vintage Info:

2006 was an unusually long vintage due to unusually moderate, cool temperatures. Some vintners in Santa Barbara County picked through the Thanksgiving Holiday into December in order to achieve desired ripeness.

Stolpman Vineyards: 100% Estate Grown:

Soil type: Thin Layer of Clay and Shale topsoil over Limestone

Trellis type: VSP

Green harvesting? Seldom, due to naturally low yields When? 80% at fruit set / 20% at veraison

Bud Break: March 1<sup>st</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>

Machine picking vs. Handpicking: 100% Handpicked into small, stacking bins to avoid any crushing of the fruit until sorted.

Yield Per Acre: 1 Ton

Technical Data:

Organic: 100% organic farming practices. Hawk perches and Owl boxes used to control rodent population. No fungicides, Herbicides, or Pesticides used in vineyard

Appellation: Santa Ynez Valley

Varietal breakdown: 100% Syrah

Harvest Dates: October 25th through November 4th 2006

Brix at Harvest: 25-26

Total Acidity: 5 grams per liter

pH at Bottling: 3.65

Alcohol % by volume: 14.9%

Vinification: sorting and crushing to 2 ton stainless steel fermentors. 7-10 days cold soak with daily Pump-overs followed by manual punch-downs through fermentation. 12 hours settling after press before racking to barrels.

Maturation: 14 months in small French oak barriques. 6 months in 500 Liter 1' Avion puncheons.

Residual sugar: None

100% Maloactic Fermentation

