



2007 Stolpman Hilltops Syrah

Hilltops Syrah comes from the most intense micro-blocks selected out of 90 acres of Syrah in the Stolpman Estate Vineyard. The blocks chosen are consistently from the “Hilltops”, three ridge lines that sweep down in a southerly direction from the head of Ballard Canyon. On the Hilltops, there is only a thin layer of topsoil above well-drained Limestone sub-soils. The mature Syrah blocks are dry farmed, to ensure that the roots struggle to find water and nutrients in the mineral-rich rock. The results are extremely low yielding (often less than 1 ton per acre), small berried clusters exhibiting vibrant concentration and natural balance.

Winemaker Sashi Moorman ages the wine in 2/3 new French Oak and 1/3 second fill oak, employing mainly Ermitage 300 Liter Cigars. The wine is aged a total of 24 months, with the last 10 racked off of its original lees and replaced with the lees from Stolpman’s Roussanne. The white lees impart a feminine perfume on the nose of the otherwise bold and intense Syrah. The Roussanne Lees also add to the smooth texture on the mid-palate.

While Hilltops will continue improve for the next 10 years, it is already showing many of its beautiful elements. Decanting at least an hour before serving is strongly recommended to ensure that all of the layers of flavor unlock with exposure to air.

As Stolpman has perfected its 100% Estate vineyard program in the last 20 years through aggressive re-planting and re-grafting, there are more and more wines being made to the quality standards of Hilltops. For the 2008 vintage, Stolpman releases the first designated “Hilltops High Density” Syrah, from a newer, Rock Star block of 3,000 vines per acre. Also, “Syrah Originals” has been released, picked from the first Syrah planting in Ballard Canyon.

Stolpman is thrilled to announce the upcoming petition for the Ballard Canyon AVA that will recognize the truly unique terroir expression coming from the Stolpman Estate and its neighbors.

Robert Parker Wine Advocate **94 Points**