



2007 Stolpman La Croce

La Croce, Pronounced “La Croche”, means “the Cross” in Italian. The wine itself is a cross of cultures as it is a co-fermentation of 60% Sangiovese and 40% Syrah: the Sangiovese descending from Italy, and the Syrah from France. On Stolpman’s Estate Vineyard, different blocks of each varietal ripen throughout late September and October, often overlapping. Winemaker Sashi Moorman selects particularly vibrant and concentrated vineyard blocks and picks them within a couple days of each other. The grapes are then cold soaked together for about two weeks, and then the grapes naturally ferment together. This process is known as co-fermentation as two different grape varietals are blended together and fermented together, rather than blended after fermentation, as two different wines. By allowing the two varietals to go through the process of fermentation already mixed together, the flavor profiles are better intertwined. After aging at least 18 months in 100% new French oak, the wine emerges big and intense, with firm tannin structure.

“La Croce” was named early one foggy morning in 2001, when the Stolpman team was meeting with consultant Alberto Antonini on the vineyard. The mist was flowing through the vineyard, and the Hawk perches looked especially eerie, and almost sacred. Consisting of one upright wooden pole, with a small crossbar for birds of prey to sit upon with a view of the vineyard rodents below, the perches look like typical Catholic Crosses. Sashi had already been contemplating a Syrah-Sangiovese blend as a unique experiment, and “the cross” seemed like the perfect name for an Italian-French blend.

2007 marks the first year that La Croce is not an even 50-50 blend. By adding more Sangiovese, the delicate, lighter hued varietal shows more influence on the Syrah. The main result is slightly more red fruit on the nose and front palate, rather than the black tar and violet of a Syrah-dominated blend. As always, the mouth-feel is massive, as only the most concentrated blocks of each grape are used for the La Croce program. In recent years, these blocks have amounted to 200-250 cases per year, and La Croce has quickly earned a cult following.

In Italy, the Super-Tuscan phenomenon began in the 1970s but focused on Bordeaux Varietals, often blended with Sangiovese. To this day, there are still very few Syrah-Sangiovese blends in Tuscany, although a few have sprouted up in both Italy and California. The structure and balance of Stolpman Syrah blended with the Limestone vineyard’s ripe Sangiovese truly stands out as a unique tasting experience.