

STOLPMAN

HAIR OF THE BEAR

BALLARD CANYON
2021

75% Petite Sirah / 25% Roussanne
480 cases produced

VINEYARD

Components
Block 1 Petite Sirah,
Block 3 Roussanne

Harvest Date
October 24

WINERY

Vinification
100% de-stemmed

Vatting/Fermentation
Concrete open top fermenta-
tion cold soak for 5 days, 20
day native fermentation, 10
more days on skins prior to
draining

Cooperage & Elevage
75% new 500L French oak
Ermitage puncheon and 25%
neutral 500L French oak
Ermitage puncheon

14.5% Alc by Vol

BACKGROUND

We've bottled wine from the 3.5 acre 1992 planting of Petite Sirah on only a few occasions. Especially in the extremes of Ballard Canyon, winemakers must wait for the Petite Sirah skins to soften in order to avoid burly, coarse tannins. This often means picking at extremely high sugars and bottling wines with hotter alcohol levels than we prefer.

In 2016, winemaker Kyle Knapp had the brilliant idea of co-fermenting the powerful, black varietal with soft, rich, and cushioning Roussanne. Roussanne ripens extremely late here on the vineyard, so it naturally brings the sugar content down – translating to 1.5% less alcohol than if we left the Petite Sirah monocepage. During fermentation, the golden Roussanne polishes the raw power of the Petite Sirah into an elegant, fine wine.

In recognition of the winemaker's triumphant experiment, artist Eric Beltz drew a rugged, older, perhaps more dapper 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 and California Gold Rush.

VINTAGE

A cold spring led to a moderate summer without significant heat spikes through harvest. Over-all, 2021 harvest arrived late, with traditional reds beginning to hit peak ripeness at the end of September and through October. The Petite Sirah slowly accumulated sugar through September and October and we decided to harvest both the Petite Sirah and Roussanne the night of October 24th. Roussanne for L'Avion was then harvested over 2 weeks later once further sugar had accumulated.

SENSORY

Jasmine petals floating on an unfathomably deep black pond, so opaque the surface reflects a mirror image of the wild blackberry bushes lining the edge. Roussanne honeysuckle pokes out of the surface sending the texture rippling in black waves.

A combination of pretty elegance and straight-up largess, like an antique Rolls-Royce.

◊ Estate, So Fresh, Combe ◊

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