



2023 SIERRA MAR VINEYARD SYRAH

SIERRA MAR VINEYARD

Sierra Mar is the southernmost site that our family owns and manages. It is our highest in elevation at up to 1,100 feet above sea level. In 2007, Gary Francioni painstakingly planted it, and drilled a well which pumps water three miles up the hillsides to make irrigation possible. The heavily sloped terrain and thin soils encourage deep root systems and drainage. Its elevation often places Sierra Mar around the fogline, adding to its diversity and mystique. This slightly warmer site also experiences heavy winds in the afternoon along with cooler nights help retain natural acidity.

WINEMAKER NOTES

Aromas of blackberry jam, blueberry syrup, forest floor, and violets evolve into savory, meaty notes. The dense, textured palate begins with blackberry jam, black currant, and anise, progressing to lush dark fruit, charcuterie, and hints of black pepper and loam. A tight, lifted finish showcases anise, apricot, and dark cherry candy. Balanced acidity and savory tannins frame its jammy fruit and dark herbal character. Co-fermented with 1.5% Viognier for extra polish and lift.

VINTAGE SUMMARY

The 2023 season rewarded patience and precision. Generous winter rains of 22.5 inches, well above our typical 14 inches, replenished vines and fostered healthy canopies, minimizing irrigation needs. Budbreak, bloom, and veraison arrived about two weeks later than average. A mild spring and summer gave way to a long, gentle ripening period. A brief warm spell in early October pushed the fruit to optimal ripeness, leading to a brisk harvest that was later than normal. In the cellar, fermentations were slow and steady, allowing the wines to develop beautifully.

Winemaker: Scott Shapley
Appellation: Santa Lucia Highlands
Farming: Sustainable (SIP Certified)
Harvest: November 3, 2023
Fermentation: 47% whole cluster
Oak: 100% French oak, neutral
Aging: 14 months in barrel
Alcohol: 14.8%
Acid: 3.75 pH
Production: 145 cases made

2023: 97 pts, *Jeb Dunnuck*
2022: 96+ pts, *Lisa Perrotti-Brown, MW*
2021: 97 pts, *Jeb Dunnuck*
2020: Not produced due to CA wildfires
2019: 95 pts, *Jeb Dunnuck*
2018: 96 pts, *Jeb Dunnuck*
2017: 97 pts, *Jeb Dunnuck*
2016: 94 pts, *Antonio Galloni's Vinous*