

Rara Avis

2017 | YAKIMA VALLEY



52% Olsen Ranch Vineyard Grenache
34% Lonesome Springs Vineyard Grenache
14% Wallula Vineyard Mourvèdre

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

pH: 3.58

Titrateable Acidity: 5.29 g/l

Residual Sugar: <0.1 g/l

Alcohol: 13.9%

Volatile Acidity: 0.527 g/l

323 cases produced



Harvest and Winemaking

2017 was a return to a “normal” vintage from the extremely warm years of 2013-2016. The Summer and Fall were very pleasant in Washington with typical warm days and cool nights. Most of our vineyards were harvested two weeks later in 2017 versus 2016. Washington’s climate is remarkable for the consistently excellent vintages. Olsen Ranch Grenache was harvested on October 11, Lonesome Springs Grenache, was picked on October 20, and Wallula Mourvèdre was picked on October 5th.

All the grapes were hand-picked and hand-sorted, and 100% destemmed. We avoided whole cluster fermentation because of mildew scars on the stems of the Grenache. The grapes were fermented to dryness by yeasts native to their respective vineyards and the wines finished the malo-lactic fermentation in puncheon. The blend was created in June 2018, aged in used French Oak Puncheons (500 liter barrels) for 18 months prior to bottling.

Tasting

The Rara Avis (*Latin for Rare Bird*) has a brilliant red hue and aromas of dried cherries, damp earth, minerals, with hints of dried sage and white pepper. Texture of the Grenache is delicious and luscious with flavors of cherries, white pepper, and dried herbs. There is excellent balance between smooth character, acidity, and light tannins.

Thoughts on Grenache

Grenache is the great grape of Spain and Southern France and is the world’s most widely planted vine. The vine produces a hearty wine with higher alcohol and lower acidity and seems to thrive in the high elevation regions of Washington.

In Southern France Grenache is blended with Mourvèdre and a myriad of obscure red grapes few can remember. In Australia, Grenache is part of the GSM. Interestingly in Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape Syrah is not allowed to be blended into the Grenache blends of the region.

We typically ferment Grenache with 25% whole clusters but 2017 had powdery mildew scars on the stems. Stems increase mid-pallet tannins so we blended in 14% Mourvèdre to bring the tannin level up to our target.

Olsen Ranch and Lonesome Springs are neighbor vineyards and sit on a high elevation bench in the Yakima Valley near Benton City. Wallula Vineyard Mourvèdre is planted on a very steep slope perched above the Columbia River in the Horse Heaven Hills.

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