

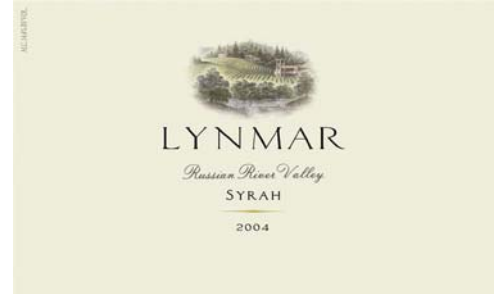
LYNMAR

Russian River Valley

2004 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY SYRAH

PHILOSOPHY

Our Russian River Valley Syrah embodies our vision of this noble grape from the coolest climate, most challenging sites we can find in the appellation. We are inspired by the great wines of the Northern Rhone and aim to express here, as much as possible, the more floral and spicy side of the varietal, yet still within the context of our highly diverse California *terroir*. It is our opinion that these floral and spicy qualities are most often found where Syrah can just barely ripen and, consequently, it is our ongoing search, and evaluation of, such locations that is the primary focus in our journey to explore the potential of this wine in the Russian River.



2004 GROWING SEASON

While 2004 will be remembered as the earliest harvest in 50 years, it was nonetheless a long, cool growing season that has yielded some exceptional wines. An unusually warm winter led to early budbreak, causing many to fret about the threat of frost. Fortunately this threat did not materialize, and the grapes matured through a mainly uneventful spring and summer. Heat spikes towards the end of the season, though, pushed many early varieties, such as Pinot Noir, to full ripeness by mid-late August. However, for a later ripening variety like Syrah this posed no problem. Cooling in mid-late September allowed our Syrah sites to gain valuable extra “hang time” for full flavor and tannin maturity with picking finally beginning at the end of September and continuing through the first week of October.

WINEMAKING

All fruit was hand-harvested early in the morning and immediately transported to the winery while still cool, then hand-sorted before being gently de-stemmed and transferred without pumping into small (3-ton) traditional open-top fermenters. This de-stemmed fruit was then cold-soaked for 5-7 days at 50°F before allowing native yeast fermentations to begin. Each fermentation was gently punched down by hand 1-3 times per day as needed. During the early stages of fermentation (22-18% sugar) the “rack and return” method was also employed to aerate the fermentations and promote optimal native yeast growth and gentle, aqueous tannin extraction. Total skin contact time ranged from 14-16 days depending upon extraction and the objective for each tank. The skins from the drained tanks were gently basket pressed, with press wines kept separate if warranted. The new wines were immediately put into barrels where the secondary, malolactic fermentation occurred over the next several months. New barrel coopers for this vintage were Meyrieux and Remond. One racking was performed - with inert gas, not pumped—with aging on light lees until the final blend was assembled for bottling.

TASTING NOTES

Our first foray into Syrah has yielded an inky, deep, and brooding wine that upon just a little aeration in the glass quickly offers up the smoky, gamy, and *sauvage* character that this noble varietal is so prized for. Also in the nose are notes of dried dark fruits such as cherries and blueberries along with more subtle hints of oolong and bergamot. Flavors are initially dominated by a Barolo-like tar quality and the classic Syrah “smoked meat character, yet there is a wealth of fruit and spice just waiting to emerge with a bit more time in bottle. The palate is long and warm, with a youthfully firm texture of grippy tea-like tannins and balanced acidity. This wine will really benefit from a few more months of cellaring to fully reveal all its riches, so please try and hold at least a bottle or two until fall 2006. We expect the structure of this vintage to easily support 3-5 years of further cellaring but encourage you to find out for yourself by periodically opening a bottle whenever the situation warrants.

WINE INFORMATION

<i>Varietal Composition</i>	100% Syrah, clones 174 and 470	<i>Winemaker</i>	Hugh Chappelle
<i>T.A.</i>	0.54g/100 ml	<i>Consulting Winemaker</i>	Paul Hobbs
<i>pH</i>	3.80	<i>Consulting Viticulturist</i>	Greg Adams
<i>Alcohol</i>	14.4%	<i>Cases Produced</i>	192 (9L equiv.)
<i>Aging</i>	18 mo. in small (60 gal.) French oak barrels (30% new)	<i>Bottling Date</i>	April 2006
		<i>Suggested Retail Price</i>	\$40