

THE STEVEN KENT WINERY COLLECTOR'S CIRCLE 2018 SYRAH "CASSIS" | LIVERMORE VALLEY

HARVEST & WINEMAKER NOTES

At Ghielmetti Vineyard, Syrah makes up 4.92 total acres divided up into two blocks, each planted to a different clone. Under normal circumstances, especially in California, it is difficult to point to a single event in the growing year that defines the entire harvest season. Such was not the case in 2018. The wild fires that raged in Mendocino County from late July to early September cast a pall on the Livermore Valley for weeks, making work outside extremely difficult and extending harvest by several weeks beyond average. Extreme smoke blocked UV radiation to the grape vines resulting in significantly slow sugar production. There are many ripening curves in the vineyard each year including seed and skin maturity, and pH and TA measures. While sugar production usually races ahead of these other arcs, the fires allowed for many of these elements to ripen at about the same time, and very balanced, high-quality fruit was the result.

TASTING NOTES

Cassis, our newest release of Syrah for the Collector's Circle, is atypical for Livermore Valley Syrah in its abundance of Northern Rhône aromatic signatures (*garrigue*, roasted coffee and game, and black fruit). On entry, the wine is soft, full of black fruit, and even more reminiscent of France in the reductive notes of leather, smoked meat, and fecund earthiness. From mid-palate to finish the wine never loses its focus on the precise delineation of acid and tannin that is often missing from California versions of this grape. And on the finish, the wine sings with gorgeous acid accenting the black fruit and gamy quality that marks this variety. This wine needs several years of bottle age before it will show its many charms, and, with the proper storage, should age beautifully for more than 10 years. Try this wine with leg of lamb heavy accented with garlic and rosemary with white beans on the side.

VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard, Block 14 – eastern foothills, Livermore Valley.

HARVEST DATA

October 4, 2018 | pH 3.67 | TA .65 | Alcohol 14.2%

FERMENTATION

After destemming and crushing, the fruit was fermented in an open-top fermenter and extraction was achieved with frequent manual punchdowns. Primary fermentation lasted about 7 days, and the wine was pressed on October 12, 2018.

COOPERAGE

This wine was aged in 100% French oak, about 50% of which was new. It was in barrel for about 18 months.

CASES PRODUCED

137 cases

RELEASE DATE

September 3, 2020

ARTIST

"Cassis" is a photograph taken by Jennifer Buchanan Sinibaldi in June 2019 when she was on a trip to the South of France. It was taken in the small village of Cassis which is about 35 miles from Aix-en-Provence. Tourists and countrymen alike come to visit this idyllic setting to hike and take boat rides to view the many *calanques* (coves.) Cassis is known for its local white and rosé wines. Jennifer enjoys traveling and hopes to capture more moments like this in the future.

