

20  05



STAR LANE
VINEYARD

Cabernet Sauvignon
SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

750 ml

2005 CABERNET SAUVIGNON SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

VINEYARD NOTES

Star Lane Vineyard, located at the far eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley, is both the warmest and the highest elevation vineyard in the appellation. Backing up to the lower slopes of the San Rafael Mountains which loom high above the ranch, Star Lane features a unique range of weathered sand, gravel and alluvial cobbles over a clay/loam subsoil. With both excellent drainage and good water holding capacity in the subsoil, these conditions mimic those of the best properties of Bordeaux and make an ideal home for the Cabernet Sauvignon we have planted on the steep hillsides and the canyon floor of our estate. Three blocks planted at the summit and along the western ridge of the ranch enjoy a very narrow diurnal temperature fluctuation and consistently produce the lush core of the Star Lane blend. A small bench land section near the mouth of the canyon lends the wine backbone and nerve. Two blocks of Cabernet Franc planted in shallow soils with a gradually sloping eastern exposure and a steep, south facing section of Petit Verdot bring aromatic complexity and intensity to the final blend.

WINEMAKING NOTES

2005 has proven to be a breakthrough vintage for Bordeaux varieties at Star Lane. After several years of experimentation we have learned which blocks—and more importantly, which sections within each block—produce the most intense and nuanced wines. Armed with this knowledge, we had the confidence in 2005 to start much of our blending in the fermentor itself—co-fermenting different blocks and even different varieties with the belief that the concomitant synergy brings a degree of seamlessness to the wine otherwise unachievable. Each fermentor is filled with hand sorted, destemmed and only lightly crushed fruit. Three to five days of cold soak is followed by a moderately warm fermentation with native yeast only. At the end of active fermentation, the must is heated to 95°Fahrenheit for three days to extract every last bit of color, flavor and phenolic material that the grapes have to offer. In early July when the final blend is made and is returned to barrel for an additional 9 months. After 18 months in 100% new French oak and a light fining with fresh egg whites, the 2005 Star Lane Cabernet was bottled unfiltered.

TASTING NOTES

The confidence gained after several years of working with our vineyard has allowed us to produce a massive yet unbelievably well-balanced wine that reflects both the unique terroir of Star Lane and the dedication of the vineyard and winemaking team. Complex but not complicated, supple yet structured, the 2005 Star Lane Cabernet is a wine that is intellectual as well as very sensual. Aromas of blackberry laced with the notes of sage brush and chaparral that have become the hallmark of our vineyard precede tiers of currant, wild blackberry and savory herbs. The wine shows a sophistication of structure that emphasizes both lushness and grip that will reward both the hedonist and the collector alike. Enjoy!

VINTAGE NOTES

Record-setting winter storms beginning in November 2004 and continuing through late May 2005 saw Star Lane receive over 32 inches of rain—as opposed to our normal 13! Additionally, several frosts in late March and April had us running our sprinklers (used as frost protection) for 3 to 4 hours each morning, further contributing to the total accumulated water received at the ranch. Needless to say, the soils in the vineyard started at what we call “field capacity,” meaning that the entire soil profile was saturated to its maximum water-holding potential. Badly needed, the extremely wet weather leached out several years of salts that had built up in soils during the preceding drought years. The vines started the growing season healthy and happy, enjoyed moderate weather through the spring and set a very good crop—in excess of three tons per acre, which is enormous for Star Lane. Occasional heat spells punctuated the otherwise moderate summer months, promoting even, expedient ripening. During a very quick and even veraison we adjusted our crop load down to an average of two tons to the acre and sailed into a leisurely harvest, making all of our picking decisions based upon ripeness as opposed to weather events. In a word, perfect!

STAR LANE WINES

After a ten year search throughout California, Jim and Mary Dierberg selected Santa Barbara County as an ideal area for growing grapes and producing world class wines. The Santa Ynez Valley is located just north of the town of Santa Barbara and possesses a variety of sub regions that vary from relatively cool to quite warm. It is within the eastern, warmer reaches of Santa Ynez Valley that Jim and Mary have selected the pursuit of traditional Bordeaux red varietals along with Sauvignon Blanc and Syrah. Star Lane Vineyard is located in the very eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley on the southern slope of Ranger Peak. The vineyards are planted on hillsides that range from 950 to 1,550 feet. The Dierbergs began planting Star Lane Vineyard in 1996. There are now almost 250 acres planted with no less than eighty separate blocks comprised of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Sauvignon Blanc and Syrah. A myriad clones and rootstocks within these eighty blocks provide an extremely wide range of fruit for our winemaker to work with. This wonderful array of grape material inspires us to be as selective and as creative as possible in producing Star Lane Vineyard wines.

FINISHED WINE

Composition: 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Cabernet Franc,
5% Petit Verdot

Appellation: Santa Ynez Valley

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