



## ***2004 Syrah Wildcat Mountain Vineyard***

**ORIGIN:** The grapes for this Syrah came exclusively from our Wildcat Mountain Estate Vineyard, owned by Steve MacRostie and his partners Nancy and Tony Lilly. Here the vines dig into the sparse volcanic soil and stand firm against the strong winds that race in from the Pacific Ocean most afternoons. This foggy mountaintop vineyard is the Sonoma Coast at its coolest and most challenging, but the vines produce fruit of great distinction.

**VINEYARD NOTES:** Yields were extremely low at Wildcat again this year, averaging less than two tons per acre. The growing season was generally foggy and cool, bracketed by heat waves in May and September. The grapes got off to a rollicking start, settled into an ideal slow ripening pattern for most of the season, and then sprinted to an early finish. Two blocks of different ages, both planted with the Syrah Noir clone, went into this wine. One provided a solid core or ripe fruit; the other contributed peppery spice. They were harvested by hand on September 20 and 27, 2004.

**WINEMAKING NOTES:** The bulk of the fruit was gently destemmed, with about 10% whole clusters added back to the open-top fermentors. The caps were managed with a combination of punchdowns and pumpovers to maximize positive extraction, and the must was pressed after a two weeks. The press wine was separated from the free run, and later judiciously re-combined. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 40% new, for 13 months, with periodic racking as required. Only the best barrels were selected to form the Wildcat Mountain Vineyard blend. The wine was bottled on December 13, 2005.

**TASTING NOTES:** Typically inky purple Syrah color, with bright aromas of blueberry preserves and mocha java. A bit of swirling brings out black pepper and a hint of wood smoke. Full, fruity, rich and round on the palate, quite plush, with a silky, smooth finish.

This vintage produced 1918 (750 ml) 6-bottle cases.