

JAFFURS



THE EVOLUTION OF GRENACHE AT JAFFURS

Sometimes a pop star, sometimes a ballet dancer, Grenache is both the world's most planted grape and its most versatile. Craig told me once, "it's like Pinot for Rhône-wine lovers." It's flexibility with food has made it a lunch favorite here at Jaffurs, where long hard days sweating in the cellar don't often call for a heavier red. Grenache has had everything thrown at it from our winemaking team. Old barrels versus new barrels. Long aging time versus early bottling. One vineyard source versus multiple vineyard sources. Whole cluster versus destemmed fruit. We've tried it all.

Let us take you on a little trip into Jaffurs' history of Grenache winemaking to discover the origins of the Jaffurs style.

Barrels & Blending (1995-2000)

We started in 1995 with original Grenache plantings at Stolpman Vineyard. Jaffurs produced only three barrels, one in new French oak and the other two in one-year-old barrels (one American, one French). New barrels provide extra tannin and structure, among other things, and the new barrel selection was an attempt to add body and tannin to the wine.

The desire to add structure to the wine led to the decision to blend in small amounts of Syrah. "We wanted a wine with more structure than the Grenache alone could provide," Craig told me. As the years progressed, usually no more than 10% Syrah was blended into the wine until the mid-2000s.

Neutral Barrels & New Vineyards (2001-2005)

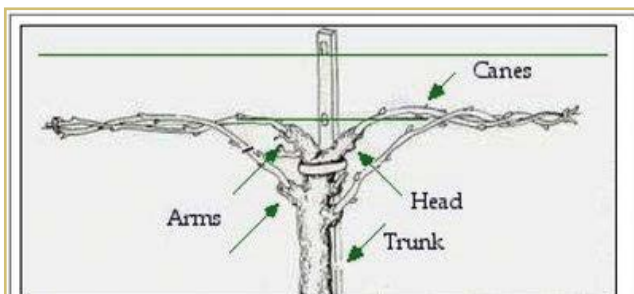
As the Grenache program continued to grow, Craig began looking for more sources to compliment the Stolpman Grenache. First, he spread the contract to include two different clones at Stolpman (Alban and Tablas clones). Then, he chose a couple of rows of recently planted Thompson Vineyard Grenache to add to the final blend. The Thompson Grenache is lighter in color and elevated the wine's profile to include more floral and spice components to the final wine.

Once Craig diversified his sources, small amounts of Syrah were no longer needed. Beginning in 2005, the bottling became 100% Grenache. In addition, Craig backed off the new barrel program for the wine. "The new oak was beginning to overpower the wine," Craig mentioned. *(continued on last page)*

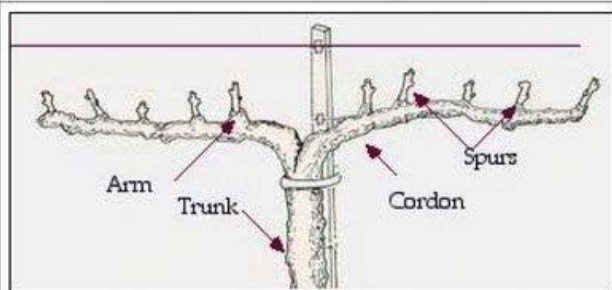
PRUNING AT THOMPSON VINEYARD

Grapevines are perennial plants, meaning they survive through the years, as opposed to annuals, which die off after one growing season. When left to their own devices, grapevines want to sprawl, lignifying young shoots into permanent wood year after year, and putting out as much new growth as possible. This is why, to control vigor and maintain a uniform vineyard, it is necessary to prune the vines back each winter.

After the harvest season is over, the leaves change color and eventually fall to the ground. In the first months of the new year, while the vines are dormant, our vineyard crews will go through and prune back 90% or more of the new growth from the previous season. A small amount of one-year wood must be kept back, because this is where the new, crop-bearing growth buds form.



A head-trained vine with cane pruning



Bilateral cordon training with spur pruning

There are a number of different pruning techniques used in viticulture, but the most commonly used method in our vineyards is spur pruning along cordons. A cordon trained vine will have a trunk coming up from the ground, with two horizontal branches extending out from either side, each branch termed a “cordon.” The spurs are located along the cordon, and it is from the spurs that the new growth will bud in the spring, producing two shoots on average per spur.

Another technique used throughout Santa Barbara County is cane pruning, whereby a select few of the healthiest shoots from the previous season will be laid down along the wire, and act as a cordon for the next year’s growth. New canes are selected annually, and the previous ones cut, so they will never form the permanent wood of a cordon.

Once the pruning is finished, cuttings are left between the rows and mulched back into the soil, providing nutrients and organic matter for the vines to take up over the next growing season.

When we visited Thompson Vineyard in January, vineyard workers were busy preparing one of Jaffurs’ cane-pruned blocks for the 2019 growing season. — *Stephen Searle*



NOTES ON THE 2015 VINTAGE

For many of the world's winegrowing regions, the 2015 growing season was preceded by weather events that varied from their recent norms. Burgundy experienced an unusually warm spring that was followed by an exceptionally hot summer with little rain. In the Rhône River Valley, weighty winter rains gave way to a long cool spring before settling into an intensely hot, dry summer. Santa Barbara County, well into a 4th year of drought, saw a remarkably mild winter and an uncommonly cool spring.

Unusual weather events are not necessarily detrimental to the production of wine grapes. A hot summer with no rain in Burgundy, for example, eased mildew pressure in the vineyards and no doubt the worries of local vignerons who must constantly deal with this problem. In Santa Barbara County, chilly temperatures prevailed just as the vines were flowering. Cold or violent weather can inhibit flower and/or berry development, which can result in reduced fruit set and smaller crop size.

A reduced cluster or crop size is not necessarily an indicator of poor fruit quality. In fact, the opposite is often true. Although a host of farming techniques are applied throughout the growing season to produce uniformly ripened grapes, a light crop load can allow for a better concentration of flavor, color, and tannin.

Such was the case for Jaffurs' vineyard sources in 2015. Bien Nacido, Thompson, Larner, and Kimsey vineyards all delivered Syrah of excellent quality, but of very little quantity. Compared to the previous vintage (2012, 2013, and 2014 harvests were especially high yielding), the amount of Syrah Jaffurs produced for the Kimsey and Thompson designates decreased from 10 to 5 barrels and 8 to 6 barrels, respectively.

For this reason Jaffurs Reserve Syrah Club members have seen changes in their usual allotments of vineyard-designate Syrahs. Despair not, wine lovers! The 2013 Thompson Syrah, standing in for the absent 2015 in the 2019 first quarter release, promises not to disappoint.

The 2013 Thompson Syrah is a big wine with bright acidity and grippy tannins. Of a deep garnet hue, this Syrah offers up aromas of soy and graphite, and finishes with flavors of black cherry, ripe raspberries, and baking spice.

The 2015 Thompson Syrah is a softer, broader, somewhat showier wine. Aromas of sweet fruit and pipe tobacco flow from the glass. This mid-weight Syrah finishes with flavors of blackberries and plums.

Although both of these wines are youthful and certainly could age for another 10 years, Jaffurs Syrahs are ready to drink upon release. The 2013 Thompson is situated perfectly within the 5–7 year window (from vintage) often suggested for Santa Barbara County Syrahs. Tannins have softened yet the dark fruit flavors retain their boldness. 🌸 — Nancy Vergara



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Neutral barrels would become a staple of the Jaffurs' approach to Grenache moving forward.

Larner Vineyard, Whole Clusters, & Early Bottling (2006–Present)

The 2006 vintage was a major turning point for the Jaffurs Grenache. Michael Larner's Grenache planting came online, and, due to its power, structure, and length, became the backbone of the Grenache bottling from then on.

Craig also discovered that the Larner grapes loved whole cluster fermentations. The stems provide beautiful florals and a broad mouth-coating mid-pallet. To this day, the Larner Grenache is 100% whole cluster fermented.

In 2015, the last major change was made, shortening the aging time from 16-18 to 10 months. When Craig, Stephen, and I discussed this decision, the intention was to preserve the freshness, minerality, and youthfulness of the wine. Grenache, like Pinot, can be prone to oxidation. Shorter barrel time helps to retain the crisp acid-driven aspects of the wine that make it unique.

That brings us to the current day Grenache. We've seen the evolution of the winemaking from more oak, single vineyard, and Syrah blending, to the current practices of various vineyard sources, whole cluster fermentations, no new wood, and a shorter aging program. We have honed in on a style that is both powerful and elegant and versatile enough to be served with different meals throughout the day.  — Dan Green



Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to learn about wine-maker dinners, club members only events, and Santa Barbara wine country happenings as they are added to our calendar.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN & AROUND SANTA BARBARA

Vintners Visa Weekend

Thursday, May 2 – Monday, May 6

Complimentary tastings at 12 Santa Barbara Wine Country tasting rooms.

37th Annual Santa Barbara Vintners Festival

Grand Tasting, Saturday, May 4, 1–4 pm, VIP entry at Noon
Rancho Sisquoc Winery, 6600 Foxen Canyon Road, Santa Maria, 93454

Santa Barbara Wine + Food Festival

Saturday, June 29, 2–5 pm, VIP entry at 1 pm
Benefit for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
2559 Puesta del Sol, Santa Barbara, 93105

LotusFest!

Sunday, July 7, 2–6 pm

Benefit for Ganna Walska Lotusland Botanical Garden
695 Ashley Road, Santa Barbara, 93108

Mammoth Food & Wine Experience

Thursday, July 11 – Saturday, July 13

Benefit for the Mammoth Lakes Foundation

Wine Walk in the Village at Mammoth, Friday, July 12, 5–8 pm

6201 Minaret Road, Mammoth Lakes, 93546

Grand Tasting, Saturday, July 13, 5–8 pm

Sierra Nevada Resort, 164 Old Mammoth Rd, Mammoth Lakes, 93546

Taste of the Town Connoisseurs' Circle Gala Dinner & Live Auction

Friday, September 6, 6–7 pm cocktail hour, 7 pm dinner
Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort

37th Annual Taste of the Town

Sunday, September 8, Noon–3 pm

Benefit for the Arthritis Foundation

Riviera Park, 2030 Alameda Padre Serra, Santa Barbara, 93103



WINE CLUB MEMBER EVENTS

First Quarter Pickup Party at the Winery

Sunday, March 3, Noon–4 pm

Ballard Canyon Field Trip

Sunday, May 19, leave winery at 10 am

Join us for tours of Stolpman, Larner, & Kimsey vineyards & lunch.

Futures Barrel Tasting at the Winery

June – TBA

Jaffurs 13th Annual Thompson Vineyard Picnic & Tour

Saturday, August 10, Noon–3 pm

9229 Alisos Canyon Road, Los Alamos, 93440

Third Quarter Wine Club Event at Westside Tavern

Saturday, October 26, 4–7 pm

10850 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, 90064