



SAINTSBURY

2006 Saws Vineyard Sonoma Valley Syrah

- Clone: 80% E.N.T.A.V. 174, 20% E.N.T.A.V. 383
- 5 days cold soak, 13–15 days total cuvaison depending on clone
- 13 months in primarily François Frères French oak barrels, 40% new
- 320 cases bottled in November 2007, released September 2008

Most winemakers would agree that Syrah generally likes a warmer climate than the Pinot Noir. In the Old World, Syrah is best known from the Rhône Valley (south of Burgundy) and the south of France, where it is often partnered with Grenache and Mourvèdre. In the New World, Syrah (or as it is known Down Under, Shiraz) is almost synonymous with Australia. So when one thinks of Syrah, one often thinks of a sun-drenched Mediterranean landscape, or its equivalent in the Antipodes. Syrahs from these sorts of climates are generous, often jammy wines of substantial proportions.

Our two Syrahs are cut from a different cloth—they are that unusual breed: cool-climate Syrahs. One is from just outside the western edge of Carneros in Sonoma Coast and this one is just north of Carneros in the Sonoma Valley. Both sites are high up on adjacent ridges in thin soils and much influenced by the cool marine air blowing from the Pacific through the Petaluma Gap. They are more similar in style to the wines of the northern, cooler end of the Rhône. Fruit bombs they are not. Instead they exhibit more of the wild gamey side of Syrah redolent of white pepper and charcuterie. Why are we making these? Aren't Chardonnay and Pinot Noir enough of a challenge? Well, yes they are, but these unique sites intrigued us enough to want to have a little fun. Besides, the geneticists just discovered that Pinot Noir is one of Syrah's four grandparents, so it is all in the family.