



B. Kosuge Wines

2006 DRY STACK VINEYARD BENNETT VALLEY SYRAH

Dry Stack Vineyard is located in Bennett Valley, just southeast of the city of Santa Rosa, in the shadow of Sonoma Mountain. Lining Bennett Valley Road are small ranches and vineyards; it has an upscale bucolic feel. Lichen draped oaks are scattered about the hills and Bennett Mountain looms to the northeast. It is not fully planted, unlike the Russian River plain to the northwest of town which is pretty much a monoculture of grapevines.

Peter and Marie Young own Dry Stack vineyard. They are all about the wine, because they make some themselves and know that without top notch grapes, the wine will not be great. The first time I met with Peter and Marie to discuss buying grapes we sat at a picnic table overlooking the vineyard and drank a bottle of Vouvray. Civilized indeed. These are some of the best tended Syrah vines I work with. Syrah is an unruly variety that loves to grow shoots and leaves, but here the vegetation is neatly tended and tucked into the trellis wires so that all the leaves get an equal measure of sunshine. With a late ripening variety in a cool climate, this is really important. Like the other growers I work with, we are all on the same page, and while I visit the vineyard pretty often I usually don't have a lot more to say than "It looks great, as usual."

Like many winemakers who are working with cool climate Syrah in California, I continue to be convinced that Syrah might be the ideal red grape for the Californian climate. In cool sites like Bennett Valley it produces deeply colored wines with tremendous fruit expression. No high alcohol jammy fruit bombs here. There's some of that "old world meets new world" combination of flowers and dried herbs with ripe black fruits and meat that, to me, is exactly what I am looking for in Californian Syrah. You can tell that I like this vineyard, I guess.

2006 was a good year for Syrah. Every Syrah that I made this year, whether for myself or for other clients, was deeply colored, highly concentrated and highly aromatic. The 2006 Dry Stack is dark and brooding, with meaty and savory notes in the aromas and an almost sweet impression on the palate even though there is no residual sugar. I used a fair bit of whole clusters in the fermentation which gives some fleshiness to the tannins and a little dash of spice to the aromas. It's a bit of a mouthful at the moment, definitely not for the faint of heart or palate. Because I am still on a mission to offer good, interesting wines at prices that normal folks like me can afford, and because this is my first try with this vineyard, I am releasing it at \$30/bottle (I know, this is not exactly cheap, but I think it is reasonable for this kind of wine). This is not a fetish wine, it's a wine that is meant to be enjoyed at your favorite bistro, or at your dinner table, with something hearty. 270 cases made.