

Carmichael Vintners

2004

Sur le Pont

A RHÔNE - STYLED BLEND

Southeastern France is famous for impressionist art, exclusive beaches, and hearty red wines. Our Carmichael Vintners *Sur le Pont* is a tribute to the latter. The name of this wine was taken from a song title celebrating the town of Avignon, from whence similarly composed red blends are created. Such a wine is consistent with Carmichael's mission of making proprietary blends from the Mediterranean varieties that thrive in Monterey County, California. Making such wines well-serves the 'artiste' in our winemaker and helps our little brand stand apart from the crowd. 'Voilà.'

The 2004 vintage of this *cépage* is made up of Syrah (76%), Grenache (10%), Mourvèdre (7%), Durif (7%). The Syrah comes largely from the Mozzini Vineyard, set in the mountains just northwest of King City, at an elevation of about 900 feet. This hillside fruit is the source of the blend's ripe flavors and power. With mountain-grown fruit there is always a concern that the grapes can ripen too quickly. In such locations, water can become a scarce commodity towards the end of the growing season, and the lack of irrigation can allow sugars to get out of control. However, due to its location and topography, the Mozzini ranch does not get a lot of direct afternoon heat, as the Sun drops below the surrounding peaks long before sunset. We also select our grapes from a block that has an unconventional northerly aspect. This later-maturing slope further keeps the ripening process from getting out of hand, while still maintaining the inherent concentration of flavors found in mountain-grown fruit.

Once in the cellar, all grapes were crushed into larger-scale picking bins and given a three-day 'cold soak' before being inoculated with the D-254 yeast strain and hand-punched until near dryness. At that time, the wine was pressed off to finish fermentation in a mix of French and American barrels, 30% of which were new. The different lots were aged separately then blended and bottled in the Spring of 2007. The wine was released on June 1 after 2 months of bottle age.

Technical Data

Alcohol: 14.3%

pH: 3.59

T.A.: 0.64 grams/100 mL

R.S.: Bone Dry

Tasting Notes

Warm and inviting on the nose, initial impressions of our 2004 *Sur le Pont* are of spice and chocolate, with plum and black cherry fruit also prominent in the aroma. Once in the mouth, the tactile impression broadens considerably with a warm, roasted chestnut quality across the mid-palate, which then translates seamlessly into a full finish, with plenty of soft, chalky tannins. Dark red and black fruit flavors predominate in this rich and flavorful blend. This wine goes well with grilled meats and robust tomato-based pastas. It is also wonderful with a big, juicy steak. The 2004 *Sur le Pont* will age nicely through 2010.