

La Clarine 'B-Sides' 2017

Producer - Hank Beckmeyer and Caroline Hoël

Provenance: Sierra Foothills, California

Farming: Organic

Grape(s): Syrah and Mourvedre

Vineyard(s): The fruit comes from two high-elevation vineyards with volcanic loam



Fermentation/ Aging: whole cluster, foot crushed in open top macro bins for 10 days spontaneous fermentation. Blended in the winter and aged in flex tank on gross lees.

Fining/ Filtration: none.

Sulfur: after a few years with occasional mouse issues, they now add 20ppm sulfite at crush. They are transitioning away from adding SO₂ at bottling but that will take some time to work through the release schedule.

Misc: In keeping with the musical theme of 'Funky Drummer,' this wine was assembled from super delicious lots that didn't quite make the cut but deserve their own recognition.

The Producer:

If wine writer Terry Theise's notion that distinctiveness as precondition for greatness is correct, La Clarine Farm is certainly primed for immortality. The La Clarine wines are teeming with life in a way that separates them from even the most lively of French natural producers. Self-proclaimed refugees from the music business, Hank Beckmeyer and Caroline Hoël began the project thinking they'd try a few things and if people liked it, they'd continue. Recovering biodynamic farmers, they have evolved from Steiner's method of rigorous input to Fukuoka's method of careful observation. Although they purchase the majority of their fruit, Hank writes about the quantum entanglement of vineyard, winery and winemaker; a cellar-inclusive addendum to the conception of terroir. The La Clarine wines are bottled inquiries, cloudy with curiosity and a bursting state of vivacious play that makes them a joy to drink and endlessly fascinating.

The Vineyard:

The base wines that would become 'B-Sides' come from two distinct vineyards. The Mourvedre is from 12 year old vines planted in volcanic loam at a 2900 foot elevation in Camino whereas the 30+ year old vines of Syrah are situated at Sumu Kaw vineyard, one of the first Hank worked with. At an impressive 3000 ft elevation the forested vineyard whose name means 'place of the sugar pines' is similarly blessed with volcanic loam soils.

The Winery:

All the reds at La Clarine are vinified identically: whole clusters are foot crushed in harvest bins. After ferment, the base wines are pressed and aged in Flextank on gross lees. The base wines for 'B-Sides' were blended together in the winter and bottled the following spring without fining or filtration.

After a few experiences with wines developing mousey off-flavor, Hank has shifted his sulfite application to 20 ppm during crush to discourage the overeager lactic acid bacteria populations that are substantially more sensitive to sulfite than yeast. They will eventually transition away entirely from adding sulfite at bottling but it will take some time to work through the release schedule.

For more email info@OlmsteadWine.com

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