

CHARBONO  
SUISUN VALLEY  
2018

pH: 3.66

TA: 7.47 g/L

12.3% Alcohol

Bottled: August 9, 2019

Cases: 387



PROBABLY SINCE I FIRST HEARD ABOUT THE SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT, I'VE LIKED THE CONCEPT OF PRESERVING FOOD AND FOOD CULTURE BY CONSUMING IT. IN CALIFORNIA, THERE ARE PRIMARILY THREE HERITAGE GRAPES, ZINFANDEL, VALDIGUIÉ, AND CHARBONO. OF THOSE, ZIN IS PRETTY WIDELY PLANTED, BUT VALDIGUIÉ AND CHARBONO ARE SPARSE AND "ENDANGERED" IF WE DON'T DRINK THEM. WE'VE BEEN PRODUCING VALDIGUIÉ FOR CLOSE TO A DECADE NOW AND I'VE HAD MY EYES AND EARS OPEN FOR A CHARBONO THAT WE COULD FOSTER.

AROUND THE SPRING OF 2013, I GOT IN TOUCH WITH BRIAN BABCOCK IN SUISUN VALLEY. HE HAD A SMALL TWO-ACRE BLOCK OF CHARBONO THAT WAS JUST A FEW YEARS OLD AFTER BEING GRAFTED OVER FROM MERLOT. I DON'T THINK EVEN HE IS SURE WHY HE CHOSE CHARBONO, BUT WE ARE GRATEFUL THAT HE DID. TURNS OUT TO BE A GREAT FIT FOR THE REGION. IT IS SLOW RIPENING EVEN WITH THE WARM WEATHER AND HOLDS ACID. WHAT MORE COULD WE ASK FOR.

MUCH LIKE MOST OF OUR WINES, THIS WINE IS THE RESULT OF AN UNINOCULATED FERMENTATION. ABOUT 25% WHOLE CLUSTERS OR STEMS WERE EMPLOYED AND THE WINE WAS AGED IN ALL OLDER BARRELS FOR ABOUT 10 MONTHS BEFORE BOTTLING.

TYPICAL FOR THE GRAPE, THIS WINE IS VERY DARK IN COLOR AND HEAVY IN THE NOSE, BUT IT DOESN'T LIVE UP TO THIS EXPECTATION. IT ACTUALLY DRINKS VERY PRETTY, ALMOST LIGHT. THE TANNIN LEVEL IS VERY MODERATE GIVEN THE WAY IT LOOKS AND SMELLS.

THE LABEL WAS DESIGNED BY LANDON DOWLEN. WIKIPEDIA CLAIMS THAT CHARBONO IS KNOWN AS CORBEAU IN THE JURA. LE CORBEAU, THE FRENCH WORD FOR RAVEN SEEMED TO FIT THE WINE PERFECTLY SO WE WENT WITH IT. CONJURES UP FEELINGS OF DARKNESS, LURKING, AND MAGIC. VERY COOL. KL

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