

# SHANE

CRAFTED IN SEBASTOPOL, CA

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On the verge of another harvest, it is always insightful to reflect back on past vintages. The previous few years have provided many hurdles – from wildfires to rain and frost.

The 2011 vintage was fraught with challenges. Early spring rains lowered crop levels significantly, a cool summer slowed ripening, and early autumn rains interrupted the harvest season. These challenges tested my winemaking skills and I am proud to say the wines of 2011 are some of my favorite.

The two Syrahs featured in this release, the Unknown and Valenti Ranch, have been both constant and fickle. The vineyard composition of the Unknown has meandered throughout Sonoma County over the last

five years. The 2011 Unknown is sourced primarily from the Rockpile appellation – one of Sonoma County's most northern, and distinct, appellations. The previous Unknown rendition contained Viognier; this year we have added Grenache noir.

Over the years, Valenti Ranch has suffered from poor weather and natural catastrophe. Wildfires in 2008 wiped out the vintage and cold weather in 2010 prevented the fruit from ripening. The 2011 bottling is only its second appearance in the last four years. It is also, sadly, the last. We proudly bid adieu to this dusky jewel with an apropos bottling focused on the savory spice elements that make Valenti Ranch so special.

I hope you enjoy these offerings and thank you all for the tremendous support I have received over the years. I continue to build Shane Wines as I maintain a full-time winemaking job elsewhere. It is through your patronage that I can continue creating wines under my own name.



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## THE WINES

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### 2011 SYRAH, THE UNKNOWN, SONOMA COUNTY 175 CASES

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In 2011, we continued to alter the composition of the Unknown. Instead of blending Viognier with Syrah (as we did in 2009), we chose Grenache noir. This year's Unknown contains fifteen-percent Grenache noir and eighty-five percent Syrah. The Grenache noir provides a brightness and verve to the wine that integrates well with Syrah's more brooding characteristics.

Our choice of vineyards also changed. We found an exquisite Syrah site in the Rockpile appellation. Amongst the craggy ranges two thousand feet above the valley floor, we sourced the Chapoutier clone from grower Ulises Valdez.

Further south, we harvested Grenache noir from an undulating vineyard on one of the Russian River Valley's main arteries – Eastside Road. This temperate locale, known mostly for Pinot noir, provided excellent hang-time for the slower developing Alban clone Grenache Noir. As with the Syrah, the vineyard was farmed by Ulises Valdez.

Aged in twenty-five percent new French oak for fourteen months, with seventy-five percent whole cluster inclusion, the Unknown maintains a careful balance between spice and fruit profiles with firm tannic structure.

#### MY NOTES

The Unknown imbues a magenta tinged onyx color in the glass and frames an aromatic profile of the same hues. Expressions of violets, blueberries, and white pepper are foremost. The sturdy mid-palate is congealed with flavors of espresso bean, blackberries, and graphite. Firm tannins highlight the finish and linger with accents of huckleberries, cola, and dark chocolate. Enjoy from 2014 and 2020.

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### 2011 SYRAH, VALENTI RANCH, ANDERSON VALLEY 50 CASES

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The winding westward road from Philo to Valenti Ranch is a route of satisfaction and frustration for me. I have spent many fog laden pre-dawn hours navigating its many curves and crests. Descending into the valley floor after a pick was a special feeling. Given its late ripening cycle, Valenti Ranch was always the last fruit harvested, usually in the beginning of November. Picking Valenti Ranch often signaled the final stages of harvest.

For our final vintage at Valenti Ranch, we have a small amount of wine to share with you from this sentimental spot. I have always treasured the nuance and deft balance produced by Valenti Ranch. The 2011 wine inextricably expresses these qualities. Saying goodbye is not easy, but departing on a high-note is always better!

Aged in entirely used French oak for fourteen months, with one hundred percent whole cluster inclusion, the Valenti Ranch is a savory and textured specimen of Syrah.

#### MY NOTES

The Valenti Ranch has always been a Rhône tribute wine and the 2011 version is no different. A crimson red color is infused with dark purple tones in the glass. It opens with an aromatically savory blend of currant, olive tapenade, and black pepper. Refined tannins support the mid-palate of tobacco leaf, blackberries, and cola. The wine finishes with balances flavors of venison, black tea, and chocolate blueberries. Enjoy from 2014 and 2019.




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#### NEWS AND UPDATES

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- TWO PINOT NOIRS IN 2012 VINTAGE.
- OUR FIRST NEW SONOMA COAST PINOT NOIR WILL DEBUT IN EARLY 2014.
- INTERESTED IN PAST VINTAGES? CONTACT ME FOR CELLAR SELECTIONS.
- VISITING SONOMA COUNTY? CONTACT ME FOR A BARREL TASTING.