

# SHANE

CRAFTED IN SEBASTOPOL, CA

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As the 2007 vintage came to a close, I sat in the Ox Pub in Boonville contemplating the year's white-knuckle harvest. My expectations entering the 2007 crush were high, and as I sat at the bar I reveled in meeting those expectations.

I exhaled deeply thinking of the obstacles 2007 presented and I had overcome. The challenges of the vintage made me keenly aware of Mother Nature's impact on my wines. My nerves and talent had been stretched and I breathed a sigh of relief - another vintage done and, more importantly, done well.

Rain came early in 2007. As a result, the usual ebb and flow of harvest was disrupted. The vintage was a marathon, lasting a full three months. We began harvesting pinot for Kosta Browne (my day job) in early September and I picked my last syrah well into November. All this because of the rain.

My only prior experience with harvest rain was in 2002 at Domaine Pierre Gaillard in France. That year, we experienced a deluge of rain and many of the syrah vineyards suffered from significant rot. So, as I watched the weather patterns develop in 2007, I began to worry. My vineyards, for the most part, would not be ready before the onslaught of rain. Critical picking decisions, often times made

easy by consistent California weather, loomed ominously as forecasts predicted rain and cool weather. After much debate, I decided to wait out the rain on all but two small blocks of Kick Ranch. My decision of when to pick was grounded in the calculation that warmer weather would follow the rain and while I might lose a few brix during this period, the maturity of the grapes would remain. This gamble paid off. The flavor development of the grapes continued to grow and, to my surprise, the brix did not dip as severely as I feared.

The rain and cool weather had become a blessing. As the season progressed and I monitored my vineyards, I began to realize the maturity of my syrahs was evolving at rate outpacing the brix levels. Like a caveman discovering fire for the first time, I simultaneously grunted and grinned when I made this discovery.

Remerging from this odd weather pattern, I smiled at the outcome of my barreled wines. In the end, what I created in 2007 are wines of moderate alcohol, vibrant acidity, and true varietal correctness. If you love syrah, these are wines you must have. Each one is radically different, but all maintain the spirit of the Northern Rhône infused with a kick of California verve.





## THE WINES



### THE VILLAIN, 2007 SYRAH

MENDOCINO COUNTY  
145 CASES PRODUCED

A new addition to the line-up, the Villain is a Mendocino cuvée comprised of six clones from three vineyards. The main fruit source of the Villain is the Alder Springs vineyard. New in 2007, Alder Springs was a highly anticipated addition. We sourced five clones from three separate blocks: Emerald Pool, Manzanita, and the Ridge. As a result, clones 300, 383, 470, 174, and the rare 99 made it into The Villain. I added one barrel of Valenti Ranch Shiraz 1 and to round out the blend I used a new vineyard - Broken Leg. The Broken Leg vineyard is a treacherously steep parcel on the far northeastern ridges of Anderson Valley. Planted to Shiraz 1, the vineyard's jagged, windswept hillsides produce intense cool climate syrah. Fermented with sixty-five percent whole cluster, aged in thirty percent new French oak for ten months, and bottled without fining or filtration, the Villain is a dead ringer for Crozes-Hermitage.

#### MY NOTES

An attack of forest floor, white pepper, brine, cola, bacon fat, and blackberries flows from the glass immediately. The wine's dark black hue coats the glass as hints of pine needles, sea shells, currant, blueberries, and graphite explode through the mid-palate. Driven by rustic tannins and subversive acidity, the Villain provides robust texture and surprising balance. Neither elegant nor aggressive, the Villain confounds you with its grace.

### THE UNKNOWN, 2007 SYRAH

SONOMA COUNTY  
220 CASES PRODUCED

Like the 2006 version, the 2007 Unknown is comprised primarily of Kick Ranch syrah. However, we sourced an additional clone from Kick Ranch in 2007 and added a Russian River vineyard to complement the Kick Ranch fruit. In all, the Unknown is a blend of six clones: 470, Hermitage, 877, 174, 4, and Estrella River — from three vineyards. The enchanting fruit and mineral components of Kick Ranch shine again in 2007. Our new vineyard addition, Archer, is a rocky slope in the northeast corridor of the Russian River Valley, and provides bass tones and structure. A dollop of the beautiful Jemrose vineyard sweeps through the mid-palate and adds intensity. Fermented with fifty-five percent whole cluster, aged in thirty-three percent new French oak for ten months, and bottled without fining or filtration, the Unknown is vibrant and adventurous rendition of syrah that carefully walks the line between power and balance.

#### MY NOTES

Freakishly dark: think magenta tinged squid ink. Intense raspberry, boysenberry, kirsch, slate, and violets explode upon opening. A luscious core is accentuated with dark chocolate, plum, white pepper, espresso, and crème de cassis. Without notice, firm tannins mingle with succulent acidity and shoot through the mid-palate. A lasting finish leaves your palate seduced.

### JEMROSE VINEYARD, 2007 SYRAH

BENNETT VALLEY  
70 CASES PRODUCED

Quickly emerging as one of the appellation's best sites, the Jemrose Vineyard again produced a syrah of purity and elegance. Due to low crop yields, we were unable to source the 174 clone but replaced it with the exuberant 470 clone. As a result, the 2007 Jemrose is a blend of Estrella River and 470 clones. The craggy Cardiac Hill slopes, planted to Estrella River, produce concentrated and intense syrah. Lying below Cardiac Hill, the 470 clone bursts with flavor and accentuates the broad and masculine Estrella River clone with expressive and searing fruit components. Fermented with seventy-five percent whole cluster, aged in twenty-five percent new French oak for ten months, and bottled without fining or filtration, the Jemrose is once again our most elegant and balanced syrah.

#### MY NOTES

A swirl of white pepper leads into chocolate-covered cherries, boysenberries, crème brulee, wet stone, and cured meats. Elegant and subtle, sustaining a vibrant purple/black essence, the backbone of dusty tannins supports a mid-palate of bright red fruits, leather, and violets. Lasting impressions of juicy acidity linger with accents of mineral and crushed blueberries.

VALENTI RANCH, 2007 SYRAH  
ANDERSON VALLEY  
70 CASES PRODUCED

In the far reaches of Anderson Valley, the Valenti Ranch sits among fog-covered redwoods patiently waiting to ripen each year. My most extreme syrah in growing conditions and profile, the 2007 Valenti Ranch is an amazing embodiment of old world syrah. I harvested the Valenti Ranch on November 6th – my latest pick to date. Fermented with one hundred percent whole cluster, aged in sixty-six percent new French oak for ten months, and bottled without fining or filtration, the Valenti Ranch is a California version of Cornas — without question.

MY NOTES

A Northern Rhône lovers wine. With the glass at arm's length, a hearty dose of tobacco, white pepper, black olives, green peppercorn, blackberries, and venison emerge. This is a spice driven wine. Like its 2006 predecessor, it looks like motor-oil. Blueberries and cassis fill the mid-palate and give way to muscular tannins and focused acidity. Hints of coffee bean, marrow, and cigar box linger through the palate and reverberate long after the first sip.

MA FILLE, 2008 ROSÉ  
SONOMA COUNTY  
250 CASES PRODUCED

The saignée of Syrah with a touch of Grenache (thanks to the owner of the Jemrose vineyard – Jim Mack), the 2008 Ma Fille is dedicated to my daughter Stella. A convivial and flashy wine, the Ma Fille exhibits focused acidity and freshness. Styled after Tavel Rosés, Ma Fille balances all its components superbly to create a refreshing wine.

MY NOTES

Flashes of citrus, tangerine, papaya, watermelon, and strawberries infuse a playful wine. Vibrant acidity and candied fruits intermingle in the mid-palate. Ma Fille finishes with zest intertwined with a core of pomegranate, melon, and peach.



WHAT'S TO COME?

The 2008 vintage got off to a torrid start. We began picking pinot noir for Kosta Browne at the beginning of September and we were nearly finished within a few weeks. Fortunately, the weather cooled and my syrahs were able to hang on the vine until October. In addition to the vineyards listed in this release letter, I added one new vineyard in 2008. The Judge Vineyard, in Bennett Valley, produced some unbelievable fruit. I cannot stop tasting the barrels. Also, I increased my production of Valenti Ranch so I will soon have more to spread around.

At the winery, all of my 2008 barrels have finished their primary fermentation and are beginning malolactic fermentation. I increased my whole cluster percentages in 2008 and almost all wines are one-hundred percent whole cluster. The lessons I learned in 2006 and 2007 helped tremendously with this last harvest. I am very pleased with the results and I think you will be as well. Stay tuned for the release in 2010.

THANK YOU

Last release I commented on the impact Pierre Gaillard and his wife Pascale had on my winemaking career. They have been, and continue to be, beacons in my development. But I would be remiss if I did not thank the Kosta Browne team - Michael, Dan, and Chris - for providing me with the opportunity to launch my brand. There is no way I would be writing this release letter without their support and guidance. Most know the Kosta Browne product, but few know the Kosta Browne people. I have had the good fortune to embrace both and, believe me, there is no 100 point scale that can accurately score their high levels of good nature, humility, and graciousness.