

CHALONE VINEYARD

2012 ESTATE SYRAH LIMITED RELEASE

“Chalone isn’t a label; it’s a place on earth” is a saying that our winemaker, Robert Cook, and vineyard manager, Richard Boer, hold as truth. The wines speak to the limestone and decomposed granite soils that are specific to this wild, isolated mountain plateau in Monterey County. The low-nutrient soils make the vines struggle and give the wines unique minerality; the diurnal temperature swings and cool winds retain acidity; the intense sunshine builds flavors and tannin structure; and the age of our vines enhances the wines’ concentration, complexity and ageability.

Wine

The synergy between mountain-grown grapes and the fabulous 2012 vintage gave this special bottling of our Chalone Estate Syrah its dense saturation of jammy plum and blackberry expression. High-mountain sage, black licorice, and minerality speak to the terroir of our Chalone estate vineyard. Ripe, approachable tannins structure the juicy, dark-fruit flavors, while chocolately oak nuances persistent on the lingering, berry-imbued finish.

Vineyard

Winemaker Robert Cook sourced this wine from 18 acres of Syrah on our Chalone estate. These acres are divided into three sections—called the Tower, Strip and Macwood Vineyards—and the vines are grafted to three different Syrah clones for flavor complexity. After keeping the different vineyard sections separate during fermentation and aging, Robert selected vine-lots of young wine that showed especially juicy dark-fruit character and plush, supple tannins for this limited release.

Winemaking

We hand harvested the grapes at night, as each section reached maturity, to retain their acidity and vibrant flavors. After destemming and several days of cold soaking, the must was fermented in small, open-top tanks, with three punch-downs a day to re-submerge the flavor-rich cap of skins. Following extended maceration to develop the wine’s deep flavors and supple tannins, we barrel aged the wine for 14 months.

Vintage

The 2012 vintage was just about perfect in every way. The growing season began with a frost-free spring and excellent conditions for flowering and berry set. The resulting normal-sized crop was welcomed after the very small yields in 2011. Our Syrah vines ripened their clusters slowly and evenly through summer’s moderate temperatures, which led to abundant, ripe flavors with balanced acidity.

Key Facts

- The limited release bottling of Syrah exudes deep, jammy plum and wild blackberry with *terroir* nuances of sage, licorice, and minerals.
- Chalone Estate Vineyard is located on a mountain plateau near the volcanic Pinnacles National Park.
- Founder Dick Graff believed Rhône varieties had an affinity for Chalone’s soils and winds; this wine is a fitting tribute to him.
- Pairings: grilled skirt steak with chimichurri sauce, roasted pork with wild mushroom polenta, and braised lamb shanks.
- “The steady, relaxed 2012 vintage was a winemaker’s dream,” says Winemaker Robert Cook.

Wine Data

Vintage: 2012

Harvest Dates: October 3 to 23, 2012

Varietal Composition:
100% Syrah

Barrel Aging:
14 months
100% French oak

Appellation: Chalone AVA

Alcohol: 14.5%

Acidity: 6.1 g/L

pH: 3.70

Ageability: 2015 to 2022