

2018 Grenache Santa Cruz Mtns.

There is, in my view, no other region in California that compares to the Santa Cruz Mountains for producing wines of distinctive terroir expression. Something about its mountain soils and mix of sandstone and greenstone, plus the lush surrounding herbs that encircle its tiny vineyards and impart their own distinctive “air-oir” gives each vineyard a unique stamp. The area is moderated by heavy Pacific influence but also lifted above the fog so that it enjoys plenty of cool direct sunlight, the perfect recipe for the grape to express itself.

The Bates Ranch is located in the sheltered Corralitos region just south of Ridge Vineyards, and is famous for their Cabernet Sauvignon, while their Grenache, less well known, is also quite wonderful.

We have a lot of fun with this fruit, producing a red and a Brut Zero Blanc de Noirs méthode champenoise as well as this Provençal-style dry rosé.

The nose is full of roses with hints for strawberry and honeydew melon which I accented with a tiny amount of aromatic Acacia wood which imparts an enticing honeysuckle element. Though bone dry, the lushness in the mouth gives an impression of sweetness despite crisp acidity. One expects from your basic Grenache a simple strawberry aroma, but here we have in support of its bright fruitiness an intriguing collection of melon, droughty “garrigue” herbs, saddle leather and Asian spice. The mouth is medium-bodied with fine tannins and energetic minerality.

This is a very versatile wine and can be enjoyed year ‘round with everything from frisée salad to grilled steak. Bring it when you don’t know what’s cooking.

My goal is to produce skillfully crafted wines that explore winemaking possibilities beyond the contemporary mainstream.



Vineyard Location: Bates Ranch
Corralitos subregion, Santa Cruz Mountains
5th leaf of experimental planting

Harvest Date: 25 September 2018

Harvest Sugar: 18.5 Brix

Fermentation techniques:
100% crush/destem
Anchor VN112 yeast inoculum
0.15 gm/L untoasted Acacia wood chips

Elevage details:
Fermentation at 60°F
Residual Sugar (incredibly) 0.1 %
TA 7.6 g/L, pH 3.23 at bottling
Alcohol 12.9%

197 cases produced.

For more details, visit www.winesmithwines.com

Clark Smith, Winemaker