

Esoterica

Carmenere 2004

Alexander Valley

Vineyard Source: Anna Darden's Alexander Valley Vineyard

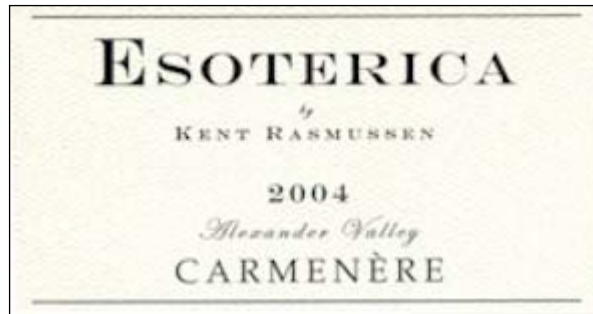
Chemistry at harvest: Brix: 24.2% sugar pH 3.63 Total Acidity: 4.0 grams/liter

Quantity Produced: 126 cases (12 x 750ml)

Date of Bottling: November 21, 2005

Barrels: 12 months in one year old French oak

Chemistry at bottling: pH: 3.85 Total Acidity 5.9 grams/liter Alcohol: 14.16%
Free Sulfur Dioxide: 26 ppm Total Sulfur Dioxide: 68 ppm



Carmenère was once considered to be the "sixth great grape" of Bordeaux, but was not included as one of the allowed grape varieties in the modern classification system (although many feel that Bordeaux would have been better served if Carmenère had been included and Merlot left out); thus, it has since largely disappeared from France. The variety has truly found its "face" in South America in the last couple of decades. Many of Chile's very best premium wines are made from Carmenère. Because of this there has been an awakening of interest in the variety on the part of winemaker's world-wide.

In California's North Coast there are now 13 acres planted, and several wineries have made tiny experimental lots just to learn the ins-and-outs of how the grapes grow best and how to make the wine.

This wine, made for the premier vintage of our new Esoterica brand, came from the vineyard of an old UC Davis classmate and friend, Anna Darden, in the Chalk Hill region of Alexander Valley. She puts a huge amount of pride into growing her grapes, and it showed, these being at absolute perfection when they arrived at the winery.

Sensory-wise, Carmenère is of middle weight for a substantial red. It is very dark in color (thus the name from the French for crimson--carmin). From a flavor point-of-view, it is much like a Merlot, but with lots more stuffing. To me, one of most remarkable traits of this very interesting grape is the abundance of blueberry notes in the nose.