

QUE "SYRAH" SERA: HOW OUR 'BOUQUET GARNI' CAME TO BE

by Jodie Morlet



MORLET

Family Vineyards

*2006 was the
inaugural vintage of
our 'Bouquet Garni'*



Spring Newsletter 2018

ISSUE VIII

*Côte-Rôtie vine-
yards overlooking
the Rhône River*



A FATHER'S PASSION AND A FAMILY PICNIC
As a young boy, Luc enjoyed spending time with his father, Eric Morlet, in their family's vineyards, winery and caves. Eric instilled his knowledge of grape farming and winemaking for crafting the best Champagnes possible. Eric had always loved all types of wines, specifically those from the northern part of the Rhône Valley.



Top: Eric Morlet and his sons Luc, Paulin and Nicolas, along with a nephew, enjoy a picnic above the Rhône Valley, 1979. Bottom: The brothers and their cousin walk through the hillside vineyards of Côte-Rôtie, tasting Syrah grapes along the way, 1979.

and winemaking for crafting the best Champagnes possible. Eric had always loved all types of wines, specifically those from the northern part of the Rhône Valley.

One year, as the family made their annual trip to the south of France to visit grandparents, they stopped for a picnic at the top of Côte-Rôtie, overlooking the Rhône River. Côte-Rôtie (*Roasted Hillside*) is the northernmost appellation in the Vallée du Rhône. These rocky terraced hillsides have elevations which reach up to 1,150 feet and can have inclines as much as

60-80 degrees!

There are two main hills which are comprised of some of the steepest vineyards in all of Europe. Côte Blonde (*Blond Hillside*) is the larger of the two hills and

has a southeastern exposure. It has a lighter soil, due to the presence of sand and a higher concentration of granite. These wines are often more elegant, with softer and silkier tannins and a brighter expression of fruit. They typically drink well at a younger age.

The smaller Côte Brune (*Brown Hillside*) is located north of Côte Blonde. It is characterized by darker soil containing clay and iron oxide, with limestone, granite, mica and schist rock. Wines produced from this hill tend to be more powerful and masculine, with heavier and firmer tannins and a meatier characteristic. They benefit from more aging time.

Although Luc was just nine years old at the time, this family excursion had a huge impact on his appreciation for

Syrah. He was fascinated by how steep the vineyards are and amazed by the dedicated vintners who plant, grow and harvest grapes under such difficult circumstances. The vines have to be able to withstand the windy climate and the hillside vineyards must be protected from erosion over time. Morning fog leads to sunlit days, but the area does receive an average of 31 inches of rainfall each year. Most importantly, Luc began to understand how the correct sun exposure and heat lead to the very best quality of wines made from this varietal. Twenty-seven years later, Luc would seek out similar conditions to craft our Syrah in California.

THE "LA LA'S" LEAD TO BENNETT VALLEY

Over the years, Luc's father would pour a Rhône wine on special occasions. Eric's personal favorites were from the town of Tain-l'Hermitage. During graduate school, Luc participated in two technical tours of the Rhône Valley. He has fond memories of visiting Châteauneuf du Pape in the southern



Imported from France in 1995, the Syrah 174 clone is known for its low cluster weight and low yields, resulting in balanced, aromatic wines with cherry fruit flavors.

Reims, the school hosted a graduation celebratory event, the white wine from Château Grillet was poured.

As Luc continued to experience red and white wines from the region, he came to prefer three Northern Rhône produced by E. Guigal. ‘La Mouline,’ ‘La Turque’ and ‘La Landonne’ are affectionately referred to as the “La La’s.” The first two wines result from the co-fermentation of Viognier and Syrah. However, Luc’s favorite, ‘La Landonne,’ is comprised of 100% Syrah. This wine would eventually become the inspiration for our ‘Bouquet Garni.’

It is important to note that Syrah and Petite Sirah are not the same. In 1999, scientists confirmed that Syrah is the offspring of Dureza and Mondeuse Blanche. These obscure varieties originated in the southeast of France, very close to Northern Rhône. Although it is not known when Syrah first came into existence, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the wines that made this varietal famous came from Hermitage. However, back then, most of those wines were sold to Bordeaux to use as blending components. Petite Sirah is a much younger varietal. In the 1800’s, a French botanist named François Durif cross-pollinated Syrah with Peloursin. Although other countries refer to this varietal as the “Durif” grape, the name never took off in the United States. So, Americans refer to Durif as Petite Sirah, and it is therefore easy to see why the confusion exists.

portion and distinctly remembers tasting a ‘Cuvée da Capo’ from Domaine du Pegau and a Hermitage from M. Chapoutier. When Luc received his Masters degree in Enology from the Université des Sciences de

Reims, the school hosted a graduation

celebratory event, the white wine from

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Luc moved to California in 1996 when he was hired to replace John Kongsgaard at Newton Vineyard. He later became the winemaker at Peter Michael Winery. (From 2006 on, Luc has remained Peter Michael’s consultant winemaker.) Both of these wineries gained world-wide recognition for their Burgundy and Bordeaux varietal wines, but Luc always hoped to have the opportunity to make a Syrah from California one day.

Beginning in 2006, Luc began crafting the wines under our Morlet Family Vineyards label. He immediately set out to find the ideal Syrah vineyard. Based upon his knowledge of the Rhône Valley, he knew that he would need to find the warmest spot in an overall cool appellation. He found the perfect hillside vineyard in the Bennett Valley. Located at 600 feet in elevation, the vines rest within the

fog line. This vineyard is not as hot as inland vineyards or as cold as those closer to the ocean. Situated in the warmer part of the Bennett Valley, the soil is classified as Goulting cobbly clay loam. The clay aspect of the soil provides a roundness and softness to the texture, or *gras*, of the wine. The cobbly soil provides excellent drainage and helps to control the vigor of the vines, naturally limiting the overall size of the crop each year. Additionally, Luc follows a strict thinning regimen. He reduces the number of clusters per shoot and also removes

the wings and shoulders from each cluster. Although not located on the famed Côte-Rôtie, Luc’s work on the vine canopy allows our grapes to be gently *roasted* by the sun. The three blocks are each planted with a different field selection of Syrah, so the resulting wine truly is a complex *bouquet*.



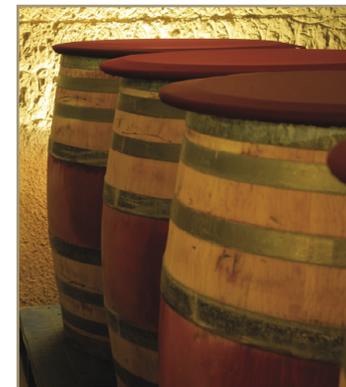
The Syrah 877 French clone lends a strong tannic grip to the mid-palate of the wine and is easily recognizable by its elliptical-shaped berries with softer skin.



The highly-coveted Syrah field selection Estrella River comes from the cuttings of a famous vineyard in Hermitage and brings a rich quality to the wine.

A TRIBUTE TO A CHEF

The Bennett Valley’s climate leads to a long ripening season. Thus, our Syrah typically represents the end of our harvest. Handpicked at sunrise in small lugs, the fruit is transported to our winery in one of our refrigerated trucks. The stems are removed and then berry per berry sorting occurs. Two-thirds of the grapes naturally ferment in small capacity open top stainless steel tanks, while the other third ferments in open top *demi-muids* barrels called puncheons. Unlike our other wines where Luc keeps each block separate until his final blending prior to bottling, for the Syrah, he co-ferments the three field selections. The caps are punched down two to three times each day until the natural fermentation and maceration are completed. The wine is then carefully gravity fed into 100% French oak barrels for the *élevage* (approximately 14–16 months).



Syrah grapes naturally ferment and macerate in puncheons.

During our first harvest, Luc was punching down the Syrah when the spicy aromas overtook him. He was transported back in time as he remembered helping his mother cook the family meals. When making a *bœuf bourguignon*, *coq au vin*, *lapin chasseur* or other traditional French stew, Luc’s mother prepared a *bouquet garni*. Luc assisted by tying the culinary bundle of parsley, thyme, rosemary and bay leaves together with a strip of leek. As the dish was simmering, Luc could smell the aromatic flavors being infused into his mother’s creation and couldn’t wait for dinner to be served. After that first day punching down our Syrah grapes, Luc rushed home to declare that we would be calling our Syrah ‘Bouquet Garni!’

As a teenager, Luc loved working with computers, but also had a great admiration for both the craft of coopering and the culinary arts. He has often said that if he wasn’t a winemaker, he would have liked to have been a chef. It was therefore only fitting that we named our Syrah in

honor of our first relative who emigrated from France to the USA, Abel Pierre Aimé Coutanceau, who was a professional chef.

Abel Coutanceau was born in the Vendée region of France in 1889. He entered culinary school in 1904 and had internships in Germany, Italy, England and New York. In 1914, he moved to California to work at the Perichon House. There, he met Lucy, a young French woman who was working as a waitress. They married in 1917. Abel eventually worked for the Mark Hopkins, the Huntington Hotel and the Pacific Union Club. He spent the last 25 years of his career at the Fairmont Hotel. Abel's daughter Marcelle was the first cousin of Luc's grandmother Geneviève. Abel's granddaughter Marcy married my father when I was seven years old. In 1994, eighty years after Chef Coutanceau moved to California and met his future wife, I visited France with my stepmother, and she introduced me to Luc! After two years of letter writing, international phone calls and a few trips to see each other, Luc moved to California. We celebrated our engagement in December 1996 by dining in the Crown Room at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.

BON APPÉTIT & GRANDE SOIF!

Luc was given the amazing opportunity to attend an eleven course luncheon on April 29, 2011 with Robert M. Parker, Jr. at then three-star Michelin restaurant Daniel in New York. This event featured a line-up of thirty-three spectacular wines, eight of which came from the Rhône Valley, with famed Chef Daniel Boulud's cuisine. A 1989 Marc Sorrel 'Le Gréal' and a 1990 Paul Jaboulet 'La Chapelle' were paired with a red wine-braised octopus with olive tripe *basquaise* with lomo ibérico. Attendees enjoyed a 1987, 1988 and 1991 'La



A bouquet garni next to Chef Coutanceau's "Le guide Culinaire" published in 1907



Chef Coutanceau, California, 1939

Turque' with *boudin noir*, glazed apple and spring onion mashed potatoes. The next course featured Chef Boulud's signature dish, duck *à la presse* with spinach subric, black trumpet and glazed turnip, alongside a 1983 'La Mouline' and both a 1979 and 1989 'La Landonne'. The Rhône portion of the luncheon concluded with a 2003 Domaine J. L. Chave, Hermitage complemented by roasted duck leg with whole foie gras, walnut vinaigrette and young mesclun. Almost seven years later, Luc still talks about the Vallée du Rhône wines which he tasted that day!

Over the past decade, our Syrah has consistently been praised for its premium quality and French style. In 2014, Robert Parker exclaimed, "Luc Morlet further demonstrates his genius with his Syrah." The following year, he described our 'Bouquet Garni' as being a "compelling, world-class, killer Syrah... that comes across like a Guigal single vineyard Côte-Rôtie such as La Landonne!" He continued, "It is very French in style, but then again, the winemaker is French!"

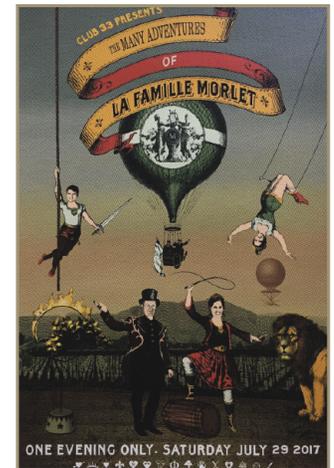
Deep garnet-purple in color, our Syrah is typically described by its aromas of blackberries, black cherries, black raspberries, licorice and cassis, cracked black pepper, roasted herbs, cloves, garrigue, charcuterie and hints of lychee nut, lavender and violet. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has notes of bacon fat, black olive tapenade, truffles, earth, pepper and grilled meats. This wine habitually boasts a velvety and opulent mouthfeel with a lush texture, chewy tannins, good acidity and a long finish. Classically made as a *vin de garde*, 'Bouquet Garni' will age beautifully, but is also approachable when young.

One of Luc's best experiences with 'Bouquet Garni' was at a dinner in October 2016 when three-star Michelin Chef Michael Tusk of Quince in San Francisco served our 2014 vintage with his Devil's Gulch rabbit with bacon, La Ratte potato and chanterelle mushrooms. The dish highlighted the meaty mid-palate as well as the spiciness of the wine. As you consider which wine to pair with your next special meal, we invite you to enjoy our 'Bouquet Garni' and trust that you will experience Luc's passion for Syrah... *A Votre Santé!*



On July 29th last year, our family was the honorary vintner at Disney's Club 33 during the 50th anniversary celebration. Manager and Sommelier Matt

Ellingson featured fourteen of our wines during the dinner. Our three Chardonnays accompanied a sautéed wild turbot and lobster pine nut risotto with yellow tomato and uni essence. Our three Pinot Noirs were complemented by English pea agnolotti, served with shaved Australian black truffles and chanterelles. Our white Bordeaux-style blend paired beautifully with a potato fennel cloud, braised rabbit, preserved lemon and elder flower. The fourth course consisted of bone marrow custard with a Kobe beef cheek marmalade. This was served with both our Cabernet Franc and the 'Bouquet Garni' Syrah. Three of our Cabernet Sauvignons were enjoyed with a Maple Leaf Farms duck breast with porcini dust and cherry confit. 'Morlet Estate' was singled out with a mountain lamb loin prepared with brambly vineyard essence. The evening ended with our Late Harvest white wine being poured alongside Canelés de Bordeaux and summer peaches. Executive Chef Andrew Sutton stated that when he first tasted our wines, he was amazed by their quality and felt intimidated creating a menu that would do the wines justice. That is quite a compliment coming from this award-winning chef! We are truly thankful that our wines are consistently featured at Club 33 and 21 Royal. Chef Sutton will be creating an exquisite dinner this March for the 4th Annual Napa in Newport wine auction benefiting CureDuchenne.



The commemorative Club 33 poster of 'La Famille Morlet'

Spring 2018 Release



2016

'MA DOUCE'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW
CHARDONNAY

Located on the Sonoma Coast, on the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean, this unique hillside vineyard is comprised of Goldridge soil and benefits from both the cool maritime breeze (douce brise) and the mild and sunny mountain climate. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine is dedicated to my wife, Jodie Morlet. It is 'My Sweet' or 'Ma Douce.'

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 94-96 points: *Opening with shy lemon oil and grapefruit peel notes with hints of marzipan, baking bread and nutmeg. It's on the palate that the true potential of this wine is revealed – truly concentrated with bags of depth and personality. Finely structured, full-bodied and with great depth, it delivers wonderful citrus and mineral layers and fantastic length. – LPB, October 2017*



2016

'MA PRINCESSE'

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY
CHARDONNAY

Located on the river bench of Sonoma County's Russian River, this vineyard benefits from Goldridge soil containing metamorphic rock. The cuttings come from the Old Wente field selection, renowned for excellent quality and minerality. Its concentration originates from the typically petite size of the berries. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian techniques, this wine is dedicated to our daughter, Claire Morlet. It is 'My Princess' or 'Ma Princesse.'

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 93-95 points: *Offering up beeswax, toast, crushed nuts and very pretty floral notes of orange blossom and honeysuckle, with a fresh pear background. Full-bodied, concentrated and with a pleasant oiliness to the texture, there is a wonderful spiciness that comes through on the long, gregarious finish. – LPB, October 2017*



2016

'COUP DE CŒUR'

SONOMA COAST
CHARDONNAY

Each vintage, the tasting of individual lots of Chardonnay reveals a strictly limited number of barrels with truly outstanding features. These selected barrels are then judiciously blended to compose this magnificent cuvée. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine represents our 'Heart's Astonishment' or 'Coup de Cœur.'

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 98-100 points: *Showing the toasty/spicy (very classy) oak at the moment, with some incredible fruit to match, redolent of allspice, toasted almonds, pink grapefruit and fresh nectarines with underlying pear tart notes. The palate is incredibly well structured at this formative stage, with a racy backbone cutting through the dense creaminess, finishing on a mineral note. – LPB, October 2017*

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2016

'CÔTEAUX NOBLES'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW
PINOT NOIR

Located on the Sonoma Coast, on the eastern slope (Côte) of the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean, this unique hillside vineyard (Côteau) benefits from the cool maritime breeze and the mild and sunny mountain climate. The noble site's natural conditions are ideal for growing excellent Pinot Noir in the Goldridge soil. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine is a tribute to the Nobles family that has been farming this land for four generations. It is the 'Noble Hillside' or 'Côteaux Nobles.'

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 95-97 points: *Deep ruby-purple colored, with a pure cherry and dark chocolate nose with hints of baking spices and soil plus a waft of dried herbs. Medium to full-bodied, densely packed and concentrated, it has a firm backbone of grainy tannins and great freshness, finishing long. Powerful! – LPB, October 2017*



2016

'EN FAMILLE'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW
PINOT NOIR

For generations, our family has been growing the Pinot Noir grape in France. Each harvest, we celebrate this time-honored commitment while our children stomp a small vat of Pinot Noir from California's Sonoma Coast. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this special wine is dedicated to our grandparents, parents and relatives from both countries. As with any family celebration or casual gathering, this wine is to be appreciated 'En Famille.'

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 96-98 points: *Deep ruby-purple colored, revealing perfumed potpourri and rose hip tea notes with suggestions of oolong and Chinese five spice over a black cherry and blackberry core, plus a waft of forest floor. Medium to full-bodied, rich and concentrated, it has a wonderfully firm structure of grainy tannins and mouthwatering acid countering the densely packed flavors, finishing long with an herbal lift. – LPB, October 2017*



2016

'JOLI CŒUR'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW
PINOT NOIR

This Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir is made from the very best section of the 'Côteaux Nobles' vineyard, located on the eastern slope of the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean. This great and beautiful (Joli) plot is at the very center of the ranch, its heart (Cœur). Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, we named this age-worthy wine after the French expression which references the intriguing and attractive character of Pinot Noir. It is the 'Charming Character' or 'Joli Cœur.'

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 98-100 points: *Sporting a deep ruby-purple color, leaping from the glass with red and purple flower notes over scents of crushed blackberries, black cherries and mulberries, with nuances of aniseed, cinnamon toast and underbrush, plus a touch of bark. Medium to full-bodied and firmly structured with a great core of rich, seductive black fruits, it has gorgeous perfume and incredible length. – LPB, October 2017*



2016

'BOUQUET GARNI'

BENNETT VALLEY
SYRAH

This wine is made from an exceptional hillside vineyard located in Bennett Valley, where natural conditions are perfect for growing Syrah in the Goulding cobbly clay loam soil. As a result of the co-fermentation of three field selections, this wine reveals a complex and spicy bouquet.

Handcrafted using classical winemaking techniques of Vallée du Rhône, this unique wine is named after the famous culinary bundle to honor our first relative who emigrated from France to the USA, Abel Pierre Aimé Coutanceau, who was a professional chef. It is the 'Garnished Bouquet' or 'Bouquet Garni.'

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 93-95 points: *Deep garnet-purple colored, and profoundly scented of crushed blackberries, black cherries and cracked black pepper with hints of garrigue, tapenade, charcuterie and lavender. The medium to full-bodied palate has a lovely chewy texture and plenty of freshness supporting the peppery fruit, finishing long and spicy. – LPB, October 2017*



2016

'LA PROPORTION DORÉE'

SONOMA COUNTY
PROPRIETARY
WHITE BORDEAUX-
STYLE BLEND

A harmonious blend of the three classic white Bordeaux varieties, this unique cuvée was inspired from the finest producers of Pessac-Léognan. The Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle come from dry-farmed vineyards in the Golden State's Sonoma County. Classical winemaking techniques such as *sur lies élevage* (aging on the lees) and *bâtonnage* (stirring) contribute to this true *vin de garde*. As in architectural arts, it is 'The Golden Ratio' or 'La Proportion Dorée.' (67% Sémillon, 32% Sauvignon Blanc, 1% Muscadelle)

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 96-98 points: *Giving pretty lemon blossom, beeswax and chalk dust notes with gentle hints of dried herbs and acacia honey. Medium to full-bodied, finely crafted and refreshing with a lovely silken texture, it finishes on a lovely ginger nut note. – LPB, October 2017*



2014

'LES PETITS MORLET'

NAPA VALLEY
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

From a judicious blend of different barrels, this special cuvée from Napa Valley embodies the youthful character and energy of the newly planted vines and is the offspring of our mature Cabernet Sauvignon bottlings. Named in honor of our children, Paul & Claire, 'Les Petits Morlet' represents their passion, talents, optimism and future.

Displaying a very intense bouquet of roasted pepper, candied red cherries and black currant, intermixed with a small layer of jam and cedar notes, the mouthfeel is characterized by sweet tannins and a creamy texture. – Luc Morlet's Winemaker Notes, January 2018

MORLET

Family Vineyards





VINTAGE	TASTING NOTES	CELLAR NOTES JANUARY 2018
2006	<p>"The wine has dense peppery, blackberry fruit intermixed with some lard and truffle-like notes. The wine has terrific fruit intensity, full body, sweet tannin and low acidity. This is an impressive debut from one of the up-and-coming new superstars in California." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Dec. 2007 RP</i></p> <p>"Good full, deep ruby-red. Explosive nose offers crushed raspberry, bacon fat, mocha, menthol, bay leaf, flowers and spiced meat. Sweet and lush on entry, then wonderfully intense in the middle palate, offering a superb combination of lift and underlying spine. As ripe as this is, there's a distinctly dry, youthful character to the finish, which features substantial dusty tannins." <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2008 ST</i></p>	(No remaining inventory in professional library.)
2007	<p>"Offering notes of wood smoke, melted tar, black truffles, tapenade, cassis, chocolaty blackberries and bouquet garni. Similar to a massive French Crozes-Hermitage from a super rich vintage such as 2003." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Feb. 2010 RP</i></p> <p>"Good bright ruby color. Black raspberry and smoked meat aromas lifted by minerals, white pepper and flowers. Intensely flavored and vibrant, with terrific clarity and class to its complex flavors of dark berries, black cherry, flowers, spices and tobacco; there's something almost pinot-like to this Syrah's juicy berry character. Morlet has really captured the freshness of the Syrah fruit. Finishes very long, with firm tannins and excellent grip and spicy lift." <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2009 ST</i></p>	Superbly complex. Has reached its peak. Drink now and over the next 4 years.
2008	<p>"Morlet has done a great job with Syrah from the Bennett Valley. Sensational and dense purple-colored displaying notes of licorice, pepper, lard/bacon fat, camphor, blackberries and plums. Full-bodied, opulent and fleshy, this stunning Syrah can be enjoyed over the next decade." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Feb. 2011 RP</i></p> <p>"Saturated ruby to the rim. Very ripe aromas of black fruits, smoked meat, licorice and violet, lifted by a spicy element. Densely packed, round and broad, but with no easy sweetness to the flavors of blackberry, smoked meat and violet. Finishes classically dry and very long, with palate-dusting tannins and sound acidity. A very serious Syrah." <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2010 ST</i></p>	Vibrant and complex. Enjoy now and over the next 5-6 years.
2009	<p>"Flowing across the palate with expressive layers of fruit, there is a caressing and incredibly inviting quality at this early stage. Plums, black cherries, spices, licorice and tar are woven together beautifully on the creamy, expansive finish." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Dec. 2011 AG</i></p> <p>"This example from Bennett Valley reminds of what Syrah can be like when in capable hands. A nose of violet, olive, graphite and bacon fat announce a truly inspired wine. The palate that follows leaves little to want for – stunning purity to the deep, smooth black fruit and floral spice leading to a long, seamless finish." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Oct. 2011 DW</i></p> <p>"Bright ruby-red. Aromas of crushed blueberry, violet, spices and steak tartare. Concentrated and broad with shy flavors of crushed dark berries and black olive. At once rich and quite dry, in a style I would not have described as California. Cool and sexy Syrah with a firm backbone." <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2011 ST</i></p>	Creamy texture. Great overall expression. Drink now and over the next 2-3 years.
2010	<p>"Blackberries, sage, rosemary, mint, licorice and white pepper are some of the many notes that emerge. Rich, dark and sumptuous, this wine possesses fabulous depth and spiciness, not to mention considerable personality." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Apr. 2013 AG</i></p> <p>"A nose of intense black currant, black pepper while violets pour from the glass. Deeper earth notes and Asian incense emerge with air. The palate is savory olive and powdered cocoa overlaying beautifully textured dark fruits and creamy oaks." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, June 2012 DW</i></p> <p>"Good full medium ruby. Very spicy aromas of dark berries, licorice, violet, lavender and bay leaf. Then tight, spicy and a bit youthfully dry, with dark raspberry and cherry flavors leading to dusty tannins." <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2012 ST</i></p>	Wonderful spiciness and vibrancy. Enjoy now and over the next 6 years.
2011	<p>"An exceptionally strong effort, it exhibits a dense purple color along with a big, sweet nose of roasted herbs, licorice, charcuterie and smoked duck. There is great fruit on both the attack and medium to full-bodied, velvety textured, opulent mouthfeel." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Dec. 2013 RP</i></p> <p>"A glorious wine to behold. The nose holds aromas of violet, pink peppercorn, bacon fat, curacao with musk and honey emerging with air. The palate is all enveloping showing solid cracked pepper, clove and saturated black fruit with a polished texture." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, May 2013 DW</i></p> <p>"Bright ruby-red. Highly complex, aromatic nose melds red berries, pepper and spices. Densely packed and sweet, with a distinctly penetrating character to the juicy flavors of berries, brown spices, lavender, black olive and roasted meat. Not a particularly fleshy wine but the tannins are silky. Finishes with a sound backbone of spices and acids. Superb potential here." <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2013 ST</i></p>	Excellent complexity, spicy character and vibrancy. Enjoy now and over the next 5 years.



VINTAGE	TASTING NOTES	CELLAR NOTES JANUARY 2018
2012	<p>“Luc Morlet further demonstrates his genius with his Syrah. It tastes like it includes some Viognier in the blend (because of the floral and lavender notes). The 2012 offers up fabulous notes of black truffles, lavender, roasted herbs, graphite, blackberries and meaty charcuterie. Other than a handful of Syrahs from Sine Qua Non, this French-tasting Syrah is the closest thing I have tasted to Guigal’s famous Côte-Rôtie La Landonne.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2014 RP</i></p> <p>“The 2012 smells of mineral, blackberry, peppercorn, violet, sea salt and leather. The palate is alive, vibrant and focused with beautiful structure.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Apr. 2014 DW</i></p> <p>“Perfumed aromas of blackberry, menthol and spices are lifted by lavender and violet and complicated by meaty and black olive nuances. Dense, full and rather powerful, with noteworthy breadth to its black raspberry and pepper flavors. Firmly structured with spicy, peppery tannins.” <i>International Wine Cellar, May 2014 ST</i></p> <p>“The 2012 is deep, powerful and explosive, with huge fruit and terrific overall intensity. Black cherry, plum, spice, lavender and sage are front and center. Voluptuous, racy and ripe, offering notable intensity from start to finish. Wilder, gamier notes develop with time in the glass. This is a super-classic Luc Morlet wine built on power and intensity.” <i>Vinous, Aug. 2016 AG</i></p>	<p>Deep and rich. Excellent now but will gain by cellaring for another 2 years. Collectible.</p>
2013	<p>“The wine really comes across like a Guigal single vineyard Côte-Rôtie such as La Landonne. The 2013 displays tremendous notes of bacon fat, black olive tapenade, truffles, earth, pepper, grilled meats and blood. It is a compelling, world-class, killer Syrah that is full-bodied. It is very French in style, but then again, the winemaker is French!” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2015 RP</i></p> <p>“Classic, with a nose of grilled meat, bacon fat, sweet spice, peppercorn, linseed, purple herbs and whiffs of earth. The palate is chiseled, with a firm dryness to the herb-laced fruit.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, July 2015 DW</i></p> <p>“One of the highlights in this range, the 2013 is outrageously beautiful. Inky blue and black stone fruit, herbs, game, tobacco, leather and cloves meld together in a deep, unctuous Syrah endowed with real class and personality. This is a striking, modern Syrah built on power and texture.” <i>Vinous, Mar. 2017 AG</i></p>	<p>Deep, rich and spicy, yet youthful. Cellar for a decade. Collectible.</p>
2014	<p>“This is very Côte-Rôtie-like, even though there is no co-fermented Viognier in the blend. The 2014 shows wonderful lychee nut, peppery, meaty notes with black raspberries, blackberries, a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel with good acidity, olive tapenade and a long, heady finish. This is just a beauty - sexy and lush.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Oct. 2016 RP</i></p> <p>“Showing elements of vibrant red berry, baked earth, lavender, violet, peppercorn, blue fruits and roots. The palate is ripe on entry. Peppercorn, blackberry and plum. Purity, firmness and freshness with plenty of texture.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, April 2016 DW</i></p> <p>“A rich, dense wine, the 2014 is endowed with demi-glace-like richness and unctuousness. Game, smoke, leather and tobacco add aromatic nuances, but above all else, the 2014 is super concentrated. The fruit tones tend more toward the redder end of the spectrum, with plenty of red cherry jam and kirsch character coming through.” <i>Vinous, Mar. 2017 AG</i></p>	<p>Rich, concentrated and meaty. Enjoy now or cellar for 7-8 years.</p>
2015	<p>“Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2015 has pronounced tar, cassis and violets with hints of cloves, black pepper and chargrill. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has a firm backbone of chewy tannins and tons of spiciness, finishing with great persistence.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Oct. 2017 LPB</i></p> <p>“The nose is a gorgeous black fruit, peppercorn, dried meats, creosote, blue plum and tar. The palate is a densely packed and well-integrated plum, camphor and pepper finishing with blackberry and espresso.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, June 2017 DW</i></p>	<p>Deep, dense and rich with lively tannins. Cellar for a decade. Collectible.</p>
2016	<p>“Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2016 is profoundly scented of crushed blackberries, black cherries and cracked black pepper with hints of garrigue, tapenade, charcuterie and lavender. The medium to full-bodied palate has a lovely chewy texture and plenty of freshness supporting the peppery fruit, finishing long and spicy.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Oct. 2017 LPB</i></p>	<p>Very expressive now, yet collectible.</p>