



## 2004 SYRAH – ALISOS VINEYARD

This wine is 100% syrah from the Alisos Vineyard near the town of Los Alamos. Time flies, this is the eleventh consecutive vintage I've worked with this outstanding vineyard, a stretch that goes back to 1994. This vineyard was planted in 1991 on mostly west facing slopes by Tony Austin (original winemaker at Firestone and founder of Austin Cellars). Tony planted the vineyard on natural roots using budwood that I provided him from the Ibarra-Young Vineyard. Tony abruptly left the Alisos Vineyard after the '96 harvest (that's another story) and the father/son team of Wayne and Loren Collahan took over management and farming. Starting with the amazing 2001 vintage, the Alisos Vineyard consistently gives us some of our best syrah grapes.

This is our fourth Single Vineyard Selection from Alisos, and though the grapes have been consistently high in quality, each wine has been quite different. The '01 is still my personal favorite – spicy, peppery classic syrah. The '02 was too ripe; it's a rich, syrupy beauty but not my style. The '03 is a controversial one – lignified stems called for whole cluster/stem inclusion. The '03 is very exotic, very old world, big and tannic – definitely one for the cellar.

2004 was a weird vintage. Very warm summer and an unprecedented two week heat wave in early September. Grapes for this wine were harvested in the nick of time on September 9 at 24.8°, 3.37 pH and 7.2 acidity. Stems were still green so it was all destemmed this time and made in our "Modern Stone Age" fashion – small open top fermenters... punched down manually twice a day... pressed at dryness... put to barrel, Francois Frères Burgundy barrels, 25% new... racked three times... bottled without fining or filtration. I selected 5 barrels out of 14 for this bottling of 120 cases, bottled in January 2006.

This is pretty classic Alisos Syrah – spicy, deeply colored with firm acidity and tannins. Like most of the '04s, the alcohol is higher (14.6%) than you normally find in a Qupé syrah. And like most of the '04s it's a big, forward, delicious wine. The structure and acidity here though should allow for aging as well, say 7-10 years.