

Porter Creek, Syrah, Timbervine Ranch

- The closest thing to Côte-Rôtie in America
- Deep purple hue, spicy and meaty flavors, and flowery elegance
 - Organically farmed

The Producer

With a focus on organic, hillside-grown, vineyard-designated wines primarily from its Russian River estate, Porter Creek produces some of the most balanced, elegant, and refined wines in America. Since the first vintage in 1982, the small family-owned winery has gone beyond its flagship Pinot Noir to produce Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Carignane, Syrah and other varietals that have attracted cult-like followings among experts and consumers alike. Porter Creek's small production and consistent high quality keep the wines high in demand, and many sell out just months after release.

Located in the most prestigious part of the Russian River appellation, Porter Creek was established by George Davis in 1979—before Russian River Valley was an appellation. The estate features 20 acres planted—all hillside vineyards (averaging 20 degree grade), reminiscent of grand cru vineyards in the Côte d'Or, Burgundy.

Following the European vigneron model, George Davis groomed his eldest son, Alex, to become proprietor and winemaker. Before taking the helm in 1997, Alex learned how to operate every aspect of the winery—from welding tractors, to running the books; he also studied enology and viticulture at Fresno State and Dijon, and trained in Dijon (with Christophe Roumier and Bernard Michelot), and in the Rhône Valley (Marcel Guigal).

With his years of apprenticeship, Alex developed a strong vision for balanced, vineyard-driven wines—a vision that he has successfully realized vintage after vintage, through rare dedication, passion and attention to detail. While trends favored riper, more fruit-driven wine, Alex stayed true to his vision, even converting the estate to organic and then biodynamic farming at considerable expense, to coax the best from the soils.

During harvest, sorting is done in the vineyard to minimize handling. While common in Burgundy but less so in California, Alex uses whole cluster press on whites and about 1/3 on Pinot Noirs, rendering more flavor in wine.

Fermentation is natural: native yeasts are rarely supplemented; ideal temperatures are attained through harvesting at night when grapes are cold and warming tanks with blankets.

Winemaking is gravitationally oriented. Alex achieves a fine tannin structure through extended aging in limited use of new oak. Wines age in bottle for 3-6 months prior to release.

The Wine

This dramatic wine comes from Timbervine Ranch—a rugged and steep 10-acre vineyard so treacherous that it would likely not pass ordinance if it were being planted today. Davis selected the site for its northern Rhône-like terrain, and makes the only single vineyard Syrah from the site other than Radio Couteau. Davis co-ferments with a sprinkling of Viognier to round out the mouthfeel, and keeps a light touch on extraction to tame its masculine side. The wine is then aged about 2 years prior to release. Authentic and delicious!



Appellation: Russian River Valley

Vineyard: Timbervine Ranch

Varietal Blend: 95% Syrah, 5% Viognier

Planting system: Vertical trellis system on a rugged hillside

Farming: Organic

Yield: 2.5 tons/acre

Harvest: Late September

Vinification: Open top fermentation with a lighter touch on extraction, co-fermented with both varietals

Aging: 22 months aging in French oak barrels (228l), 20% new; 3-6 months aging in bottle prior to release

Production: 400 cases

Tasting Notes: Green olive, bacon and floral notes on the nose. On the palate the wine is elegant, refined, a hint of pepper with a very persistent finish.