



AMERICA'S GRAND WINE ESTATE

*Niebaum-Coppola*

INTRIGUED BY THE IDEA of developing an Estate Syrah that would reflect the terroir of this Rutherford property, Winemaker Scott McLeod and Roman Coppola conceived a plan to create a rich, heavily textured Syrah reminiscent of the great Shirazes "down under." In 1996, Syrah clones #1 through #7 from the Barossa field station in Australia were planted in the Gate vineyard beside vines of Petit Verdot, Zinfandel, and Cabernet Franc. Today, this Syrah has a wonderful personality, being both deeply colored and profusely concentrated. Roman Coppola designed the label, selecting bold typeface and simple artwork to parallel the wine's pure character and intensity of flavors.

### Vineyard Notes

Although the Niebaum-Coppola Estate resides in the heart of Cabernet country, portions of the property are better suited to other red grape varieties such as Syrah. Planted in the heavy and diverse soils of the Gate Vineyard, the organically-grown Syrah from this locale develops with dark fruit flavors and low tannins. When combined with Petit Verdot from this same vineyard and Merlot, which is sourced from mature vines in the Gio Vineyard, this Syrah demonstrates ripe, clearly defined fruit flavors.

### Vintage Notes

The 2001 vintage is already considered a classic in California. Dry, sunny days with plenty of fog in late summer defined a growing season that was as close to perfect as one could imagine. Characteristic of California weather patterns, when autumn arrived, hot Indian summer conditions in September gave way to warm, beautiful days in October. As a result, the grapes matured evenly and reached maximum ripeness with relative ease.

### Winemaking Notes

We have always been fans of the great Australian Shiraz wines because the Aussies share a similar philosophy about winemaking, preferring fruit-driven wines with less tannin to overcome than, say, French Syrah from the Northern Rhone. We finally gave in to the temptation of growing Syrah in Rutherford and chose Australian clones for our first planting in the Gate Vineyard.

The 2001 RC Reserve is extremely viscous, possessing a saturated color and violet hue. Great Syrah has the unmistakable character of crushed, sweet boysenberry, cassis, and blackberry. The 2001 has the telltale stamp of these traits, as well as an almost sweet impression. Additionally, a spicy quality results from the addition of Petit Verdot. In cooler regions, Syrah naturally develops notes of black or white pepper; it's advantageous to add Petit Verdot to this Rutherford wine in order to duplicate those qualities. In RC Reserve, Petit Verdot also contributes soft, silky tannins and provides a more textured palate. Blending in

a small quantity of Merlot rounds out the wine with flavors of juicy blueberry, black licorice, and aromatic sage. By adding these varieties to the Syrah, we achieve a wine that speaks more of a place than an individual varietal. The wine was aged in a combination of new French and American oak for 25 months, bringing together the robust flavors of the French oak barrels and the great spice element from the American oak. The 2001 vintage can be enjoyed now or allowed to develop additional complexity through cellaring.

Scott McLeod, Winemaker



2001 RC RESERVE

APPELLATION: RUTHERFORD, NIEBAUM-COPPOLA ESTATE	BARREL REGIMEN: 25 MONTHS FRENCH AND AMERICAN OAK	TOTAL ACID: 0.56 G/100 ML	CASE PRODUCTION: 480 (6 PACK CASES)
VINEYARD: GATE AND GIO		ALCOHOL: 14.2%	PH: 3.61
BLEND: 91% SYRAH, 7% MERLOT, 2% PETIT VERDOT		BOTTLED: MARCH 2, 2004	RELEASED: MAY 1, 2004