

Review Overview

Babcock Syrah “Black Label Cuvée”

2002 Vintage

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine March 2006

Score: 87 points - 1 Puff (out of 3)

This wine represents a slightly different approach to the making of Syrah. It carries plenty of blackberryish fruit both in the nose and mouth along with white pepper-like spice and a hint of cocoa. However, it then diverges from the usual model in its more pushy, structured acidity, and it works quite well in its chosen style.

2001 Vintage

Wine & Spirits Magazine Feb 2005

SCORE: 93 points

Syrah grown in the soils of Santa Barbara can develop brilliant spice, and it's front and center in this wine. The fruit of the wine tastes like grapes basking in the sun, wrapped in aromas of chestnut leaves, cigar tobacco, and cedar smoke. The wine is pumped up by spice the way black peppercorns can be embedded in a seared steak or duck breast. Either would be delicious with this.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine Nov 2004

1 Puff (out of 3)

Starting out nicely with rich aromas of black cherries, toast, vanilla and cocoa, this well fruited wines is...sprinkled with the classic spice of Syrah.

Wine Spectator

SCORE: 87 points

Rich and complex, with a medley of plum, blackberry, green olive and pepper, turning austere and firmly tannic, with a black pepper aftertaste. Drink now through 2008. — JL

2000 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast December 2002

SCORE: 93

With wines like this, Santa Barbara argues that it's the greatest home for Syrah in California. Incredibly dark and dense, the wine offers up deep flavors of plum and blackberries. It's pretty tannic now, but fat and dense, the kind of wine that will easily age. Possesses that elusive quality of elegance. Editor's Choice. —S.H.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine February 2003

SCORE: 91- 2 Puffs (out of 3)

Sweet oak, vanilla beans, black cherries and a bit of loamy earth rise from the broad, deeply draughted aromas of this serious Syrah, and, while its acid-pushed tannins are a bit of an annoyance just now, its concentrated flavors are up to the challenge and remain filled with fruit and spice to the end. Happily free of the glaring heat that is too often the price of such size and strength, the wine will clearly benefit from age, and its solid center should keep it going for as much as another six to ten years.

1999 Vintage

Wine & Spirits Magazine March/April 2002

SCORE: 93

The concentrated color shows a blue edge, a note of how tight this wine remains, sealed in its youth. It's a completely modern take on syrah, all plum, all night long. Red tannins cut the plum like a sharp stone. And it remains pithy, fresh, lifted by an intoxicating aroma, an interweave of gamey scents and clove with all that deep plum fruit. Enjoy a bottle now with garlicky roast leg of lamb, and put some away for winters to come.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine February 2002

SCORE: 92 - 2 Puffs (out of 3)

Wonderfully fruity and compellingly rich, this intensely blackberry-scented wine is complexed by notes of creme brûlée, toast, cured meats and vanilla. This wine has depth to spare and, for all of its impressive range, is kept on a more or less direct line by its insistent fruitiness that rules the roost from first sniff to lasting aftertaste. Its suppleness invites enjoyment now as much as later, yet it has the inner stuffing and solidity to grow for years to come.

The Wine News Aug/Sept 2001

SCORE: 92

Stunning royal purple hue. Rich aromas of black cherry, chocolate and toasted oak. Powerful, intensely concentrated flavors of blueberry and black cherry. Youthful, tannic finish with a Bing cherry note and a lick of orange zest-like acidity.

Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate Feb/28/02

SCORE: 89

The 1999 Syrah Black Label Cuvée exhibits copious new oak, higher extraction, bold muscular tannin, and notes of cassis, olives, tapenade, and pepper. Elegant and rich, with nicely integrated acidity as well as a smooth, expansive, rich finish, this impressive effort will drink well for 8-10 years.

Wine Enthusiast Nov/01

SCORE: 88

There's lots of deep blueberry and sour red-berry fruit on the Babcock's nose, which is offset by saddle leather and wet wool notes. In the mouth, earth and tobacco flavors vie with oak; plenty of tannins give it nice structure and an almost chewy mouth-feel. Finishes with tangy acid, and black pepper and mineral flavors.