



FAMILY WINERY

2014 *La Serenne*, Boushey Vineyard Syrah

The 2014 Vintage... In the vineyards, 2014 marked the third year in a row for an early start for vine growth. Flowering, a crucial period in the vines annual cycle, took place under ideal weather conditions. The warm, calm weather resulted in one of the most compressed flowering periods in recent years, and very even berry size. This also meant that a large crop was hanging in the vineyards, which allowed growers to “green harvest”, a mid-season dropping of any bunches that were uneven or lagging behind in development.

Steady heat continued through July and August, leading to the earliest harvest ever for Betz Family Winery: we picked our first grapes on September 3rd. Over the following 4 weeks we harvested over 40 different vineyard blocks, many of them only 1-2 tons in size. Add to that our time in the vineyards in order to make the best harvest decisions possible, we visited and sampled each vineyard two to three times each week. We were rocking! The wines reflect the steady weather and even grape ripeness.

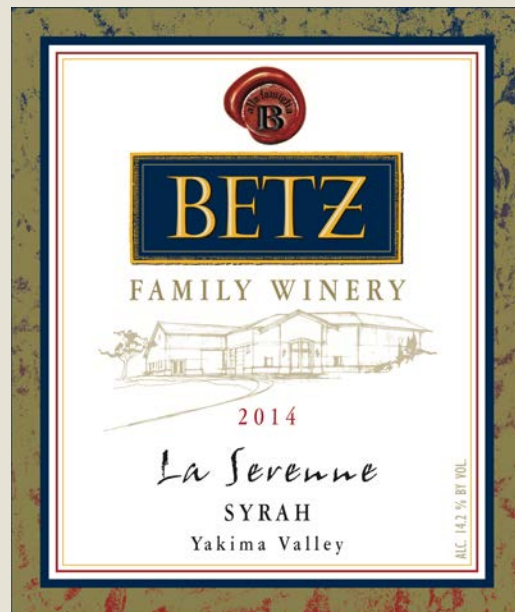
Boushey Vineyard, which has been the source of *La Serenne* since 2000, is one of the stars of the mid-Yakima Valley. Farmed by Dick Boushey, a proponent of Washington Syrah since the 1980's, this site has gained notoriety for its unique varietal expression and supple texture. The word *Serenne* is an affectionate name for Syrah in the local dialect of Ampuis, a town in the heart France's northern Rhône valley. We find this to be a fitting name for our Syrah from Boushey, as it reminds us of the wild (or as the French say “*Sauvage*”), Rhône-esque character of the wine.

The fruit reflects the sum total of conditions here: location in the mid-Yakima Valley, higher elevation, cooler climate, soils undisturbed by the Missoula Floods and Dick's exemplary farming practices. Harvest is typically 2-3 weeks later than our Syrah vines planted elsewhere, indicating the uniqueness of its position.

In 2014, the arriving fruit from Boushey showed exceptional maturity of not only berries, but stems as well. Because of this, the decision

was made to leave between 25-50% of the stems (also called whole clusters) in the fermentations. This technique is often used in the Rhône and can provide additional tannic structure as well as interesting aromatic complexity.

The character of the 2014 *La Serenne* is one of density and plushness, combined with fine tannins and wild, gamey aromas. Although Boushey Vineyard experienced record heat in 2014, the cooler night-time temperatures of the site resulted in a vibrant acidity in the finished wine. The addition of whole grape clusters during fermentation contributed a nuance of green olive alongside a distinct floral character.



CURRENT RATING:

Robert Parkers Wine Advocate – 93 POINTS

“The pure, elegant and textured 2014 Syrah la Serenne offers that classic violet and floral characteristics of the cuvee, as well as medium to full-bodied richness, lots of black raspberry fruit, fine, sweet tannin and a great finish. It's not as powerful or concentrated as the La Cote Rousse, yet it's a joy to drink and will cruise for a decade or more on its balance and purity.” - Jeb Dunnuck

