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2005 was a rare season, long and mild and mercifully free of late season heat, resulting in wines of great ripeness and color but with bright acidity and freshness. The Reserve is deeply colored and full bodied, with notes of chocolate, india ink, brown spices. We've gotten a better handle on the sometimes aggressive tannins of Tempranillo and the 2005 is fleshy with a tannic backbone—it is a big red wine, after all—but not harsh or “grippy.” The character of the ranch is coming into better focus with each successive vintage and now I think I can say with some confidence that what I see coming from this rocky patch of ground is an intriguing combination of savory, sometimes earthy notes along with more typical new world style ripe, grapy fruit.

Some technical notes:

Tempranillo clone 1 planted on a combination of 3309 and 110R rootstocks. 110R is vigorous and drought tolerant, 3309 is not quite as drought tolerant and is less vigorous. We wanted some variety since we were not sure exactly how the vines would perform on this site. So far there has not been a dramatic difference between the two rootstocks.

Most years the harvest is in late September. Tempranillo is pretty resistant to shriveling and the wine never has a raisiny flavor, despite the sometimes hot fall weather. Thick skins, lots of color and tannin.

Winemaking: 5-7 day cold soak at 55F. No added yeast. Short, fairly warm fermentation with 2-3 pumpovers/day. The frequency of pumpovers varies according to how the extraction is coming along. Generally pressed just before the wine is dry, and it finishes in tank or barrel, off the skins. Aged in French Oak, approximately 60% new, combination of several coopers and wood types. Mostly burgundy style barrels. Racked just once, during the early spring following vintage, and bottled after about 16 months in barrel.

The Reserve is simply a lot and barrel selection. It usually comes from the upper section of the vineyard where the vigor is lower and the soil is more rocky.