

## SAXUM BOOKER VINEYARD

### 2009 BOOKER VINEYARD

70% Syrah, 30% Mourvèdre

ALC: 15.8%

Cases 750 ml: 350

Vineyard: Booker Vineyard

Released: January 2012

Release Price: \$85

Drink: 2012-2021

#### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The 2009 wines are quite powerful. There are some very substantial tannins on these wines, they are muscular! I feel that these late releases of the 2009's are going to benefit from a few years of cellar age, even more so than any wines we have ever made, so be patient with them. Enjoy some now, but be sure to stash some in your cellar so you can see how they evolve after a few years. You will be well rewarded for waiting.

#### REVIEWS:

**Antonio Galloni, Wine Advocate #196, Aug 2011**

**Rating: 96+**

**Drink: 2014 - 2021**

*The 2009 Booker Vineyard is 70% Syrah and 30% Mourvedre from one of the rockiest, steepest hillsides in Paso Robles. Layers of dark fruit, spices, tar and licorice emerge from the glass in this deep, sensual wine. Booker usually sees the highest percentage of new oak, and elements of spiciness come through on the finish, although some of the oakiness blows off with time in the glass. Booker is another site Smith planted and continues to pull fruit from, in this case three blocks of Syrah and one of Mourvedre. In 2009 there were two lots; the first 100% Syrah vinified with 20-25% stems, the second a Syrah/Mourvedre co-ferment. Both lots were blended for the finished wine. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2021.*

**James Laube, Wine Spectator, Issue: Web Only 2011**

**Rating: 95**

**Drink: now through 2024**

*A rather muscular 2009, yet for all its firmness and density there's a purity of flavor, focus and persistence, gaining minerality yet driven by the tight boysenberry, blackberry and wild berry fruit. Ends with gripping tannins that make this all the more exciting. Syrah and Mourvèdre.*

**Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar, Nov/Oct 2011**

**Rating: 94**

*Opaque purple. Wild, expressive aromas of dark berries, cherry-cola, candied licorice, woodsmoke and Indian spices. Sappy and expansive, with excellent clarity and depth, and a seamless character, to its sweet blackberry and mulberry flavors. Becomes spicier with air and finishes with superb energy and lingering sweetness.*

### 2008 BOOKER VINEYARD

92% Syrah, 8% Grenache

ALC: 15.8%

Cases 750 ml: 280

Vineyard: Booker Vineyard

Released: January 2011

Release Price: \$75

Drink: 2011-2024

#### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The 2008 Booker Vineyard is a beast. It's a similar blend to the Bone Rock, but shows itself quite differently, with the massive fruit very much front and center, but great lift and nerve. I personally like this one even more than the 2007.

#### REVIEWS:

**Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #190, Aug 2010**

**Rating: 98**

**Drink: 2010 - 2025**

*The 2008 Booker Vineyard (92% Syrah and 8% Mourvedre, which had also been bottled immediately before my visit) has an opaque purple color and a wonderfully sweet nose of black cherry, black currant, licorice, incense, and some Asian spices. The wine has seamless lushness, a voluptuous texture, stunning purity, and a very long, 40-second-plus finish. Booker is another top site that I believe was planted with Justin Smith's help. It is a 40-acre vineyard sitting on similar limestone soils. This incredible wine would probably benefit from a couple of years of cellaring, as the structure is more present, no doubt due to the high level of Syrah in the wine. It should evolve for 10-15 more years.*

**James Laube, Wine Spectator, Issue: Feb 28, 2011**

**Rating: 96**

**Drink: now through 2014**

*Starts out open-knit, rich and fleshy, yet builds intensity. Powerful, yet with a measure of restraint, delivering supple plum, blackberry and wild berry fruit, with touches of mineral and black licorice. This wows you with both gushing fruit and a dancing delicacy of finesse. Ends with chunky fruit flavors. Syrah and Mourvèdre.*

**Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar, Nov/Dec 2010**

**Rating: 94**

*Inky ruby. Raspberry and cherry preserves on the nose, with complicating notes of rose oil, Szechuan peppercorn and allspice. Impressively complex, sappy red berry compote flavors are given grip by a touch of cherry pit and gain sweetness with air. For such a massive wine there's uncanny energy here as well. The finish repeats the floral and spice notes and clings with superb clarity and intensity.*

### 2007 BOOKER VINEYARD

95% Syrah, 5% Grenache

ALC: 15.5%

Cases 750 ml: 350

Vineyard: Booker Vineyard

Released: January 2010

Release Price: \$75

Drink: 2011-2023

#### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

## SAXUM BOOKER VINEYARD

Our 2007s, are what I feel is the best vintage yet for Saxum. So yes, I think each of these wines is the best that we have done, they are more complex, layered, and concentrated than previous years. These wines have a long life ahead of them due to their great acidity and tannin structure, yet they are enjoyable now because they are so well balanced. The 2007's are chameleons too. When you first pour yourself a taste they quickly start changing in the glass. Every smell and taste produces a new element, the first second there are violets and the next is roasted meats, truly fascinating. It will be a joy to watch how they develop in bottle over the next decade or more.

The Booker Vineyard was bottled in early summer 2009.

### REVIEWS:

**Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #184, Aug 2009**

**Rating: 99**

**Drink: 2009 - 2021**

*The inky/purple-hued 2007 Booker Vineyard (95% Syrah and 5% Grenache) boasts a floral-dominated bouquet with camphor, blackberry, roasted meat, and espresso scents in the background. The density, flavor intensity, richness, full-bodied power, elegance, and freshness are all hallmarks of this special vintage in the Central Coast. This wine should drink well for 10-12+ years.*

*One of California's super-star producers, Saxum owns one of the state's most remarkable vineyard sites, the James Berry Vineyard, which has been broken into a number of different blocks, all planted on rocky limestone hillsides. This estate's approach to winemaking is decidedly artisanal, with extraordinarily small yields as well as a minimalist winemaking philosophy. Proprietors Justin and Heather Smith, who seem much too young to be producing such prodigious wines, fashion separate blends from the different blocks of the James Berry Vineyard. They also produce a cuvee from the 7-acre Heart Stone Vineyard (also planted on limestone soils) and one from the Booker Vineyard. Saxum's 2006s are all home runs, but the utterly prodigious 2007s should resonate for decades, and showcase the brilliant potential of these limestone hillside sites west of Highway 101. Kudos to everyone at Saxum. My visit began with two of Smith's experimental cuvees, which are only available to mailing list customers. As remarkable as the 2006s are, the 2007s are even more prodigious, showcasing just how brilliant certain Paso Robles terroirs can be. Even the most cynical observers of the Rhone Ranger scene will have to take notice of these wines. Even though some of the 2007s had just undergone bottling, I was blown away by how well they performed just a week after being bottled (often one of the worst times to taste a wine). In short, Saxum's prodigious 2007s are even more nuanced, complex, and concentrated than their brilliant 2006s.*

**James Laube, Wine Spectator, Issue: Feb 28, 2010**

**Rating: 94**

**Drink: now through 2014**

*Deliciously rich and layered, full-bodied and well-structured, with a complex core of blackberry, huckleberry, anise and mineral flavors that take on a tar and graphite edge on the finish, where*

*the tannins give this traction. Syrah and Grenache. Drink now through 2017. 350 cases made.*

**Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar, Nov/Dec 2009**

**Rating: 95**

*Inky purple. Complex aromas of black raspberry, cherry-cola, smoky Indian spices, violet and yellow rose. Pepper and smoke notes build with air and add complexity to the sweet black and blue fruit liqueur flavors, which are framed by velvety tannins. Wonderfully rich yet extremely fresh wine with outstanding finishing clarity and mineral-driven thrust.*

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## 2006 BOOKER VINEYARD

100% Syrah

ALC: 16.6%

Cases 750 ml: 275

Cases 1.5L: 46

Vineyard: Booker Vineyard

Released: January 2009

Release Price: \$55

Drink: now-2018

### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

We aged it in new French puncheons for 20 months before bottling, like all our wines, it was only racked once and bottled without fining or filtration.

### REVIEWS:

**Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #184, Aug 2009**

**Rating: 94**

**Drink: 2008-2018**

*The denser purple-hued 2006 Booker Vineyard offers up aromas of acacia flowers, blackberry liqueur, charcoal, and graphite. Although not as complex as its 2006 siblings, it is a dense, full-bodied, mouth-filling wine that saturates the palate, and finishes stunningly long and pure.*

**James Laube, Wine Spectator, Issue: Mar 31, 2009**

**Rating: 94**

**Drink: now through 2015**

*Bold, ripe, intense and vibrant, with a full-throttle core of dark berry fruit that's rich, focused and full-bodied, offering blackberry, wild berry, plum and black cherry, picking up spice, flora, tar and black licorice flavors in spades. Syrah. Drink now through 2015. 350 cases made.*

**Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar, Nov/Dec 2008**

**Rating: 92**

*Vivid ruby. Highly aromatic nose offers cherry, blueberry, violet and smoky Indian spices. Sappy and finely focused, offering sweet red and dark berry flavors, tangy minerals and a late note of candied flowers. Tannins slowly gain strength on the finish but are more than balanced by fruit. "Next year this will start getting mourvedre," Smith offered.*

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*energy as well as earth and fruit. A fascinating wine.*

### 2005 BOOKER VINEYARD

92% Syrah, 8% Grenache

ALC: 15.9%

Cases 750 ml: 275

Cases 1.5L: 46

Vineyard: Booker Vineyard

Released: January 2009

Release Price: \$55

Drink: now-2023

#### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

This is a new planting, and like the Heart Stone Vineyard, I have been working with the owners from the beginning. It's a beautiful site located next to L'Aventure Winery, with very steep calcareous and siliceous soils. Meticulously farmed by Eric and Lisa Jensen, this is a vineyard that has vaulted to the top tier of California plantings. The majority of my blocks are on an east-facing slope, giving them gentle abundant sunshine.

The wine can be described as opulent, full-bodied and luscious, yet it still has great definition, with a nose of cassis, raspberries, and toast, and a finish that just doesn't stop, we shall see how it ages, but given the great balance I think it will be 12-15 years no problem.

#### REVIEWS:

**Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #177, Jun 2008**

**Rating: 94**

**Drink: 2008-2023**

*A blend of 92% Syrah and 8% Grenache, the 2005 Booker Vineyard is the debut vintage of this 400-case cuvee produced from a hillside vineyard situated on the west side of Highway 101. It exhibits plenty of crushed rock, sweet black fruit, and underbrush/forest floor characteristics along with sweet tannin and a structured, muscular personality similar to a northern Rhone. Big and powerful yet precise and well-delineated, it should drink nicely for 10-15 years. The bottled 2005s are all performing well.*

**Josh Reynolds, James Laube, Wine Spectator,**

**Issue: Mar 31, 2008**

**Rating: 95**

**Drink: now through 2013**

*Shows wonderful aromas of rich, chocolaty blackberry and boysenberry, with a touch of huckleberry. Dense, concentrated and sharply focused, this finishes with a long, layered, persistent aftertaste. Syrah and Grenache. Drink now through 2013. 350 cases made.*

**Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar, Nov/Dec 2007**

**Rating: 93**

*Bright purple. Powerfully scented nose offers smoky cassis and bitter cherry aromas, along with cured meat, violet and cigarbox; really smells like Cote-Rotie! Sweet and round, displaying intense red and dark berry preserve flavors and a strong mineral undertone, finishing with building tannins. Balances depth and*