

SAXUM PADEREWSKI VINEYARD

2009 PADEREWSKI VINEYARD

39% Zinfandel, 38% Syrah, 13% Petite Sirah, 10% Mourvèdre
ALC: 15.9%

Cases 750 ml: 400

Vineyard: Paderweski Vineyard

Released: January 2012

Release Price: \$85

Drink: now - 2021

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The Paderewski Vineyard is a beautiful property owned by Bill and Liz Armstrong, the owners of Epoch Estate. It was the site of the legendary vineyard of Ignacy Jan Paderewski. If you are unfamiliar with the life and music of Ignacy, please look into it, he was a fascinating character and brilliant musician. Long story short, we have replanted the original site. We felt a wine coming from the Paderewski Vineyard had to include the original varieties that made it famous, Zinfandel and Petite Sirah, but in a blend that also showcased our beloved Rhone Varietals too. Our wines are never racked off their lees and are bottled unfined and unfiltered.

REVIEWS:

Antonio Galloni, Wine Advocate #196, Aug 2011

Rating: 97

Drink: 2014-2021

The 2009 Paderewski Vineyard is a new bottling from a site Smith developed for Bill and Liz Armstrong, the owners of Epoch. Zinfandel, Syrah, Petit Sirah and Mourvèdre are planted in separate plots but co-fermented. Layers of dark fruit meld into flowers, mint, sweet spices, menthol, eucalyptus and plums, with marvelous density and harmony. This shows superb aromatic complexity and tons of nuance to match its absolutely striking personality. It is a dazzling effort, especially for a young vineyard in just its third leaf. The blend was 39% Zinfandel, 38% Syrah, 13% Petite Sirah and 10% Mourvèdre. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2021.

This is a thrilling set of wines from Heather and Justin Smith. Everything starts and ends in the vineyards for Justin Smith. His family owns the James Berry Vineyard, one of the rare sites in Paso Robles on limestone. Smith has also planted several other top vineyards in Paso while mentoring a number of his colleagues. Smith describes 2009 as a long, cold growing season with a lot of rain. All of the Grenache and Syrah was in before the big storm on October 13, while the Mourvedre was picked a few weeks later. Smith credits dry-farming for keeping his vines robust and able to withstand the elements. Winemaking is stripped down to the core. Two sorting tables ensure only the finest fruit makes it to the crusher. The grapes are gently destemmed, then undergo around 7 days of cold soak with a high amount of whole berries, and some whole clusters (as noted below). There is no sulfur added at crush. The wines undergo a total of approximately 30-40 days of maceration with indigenous yeasts and are then moved straight to barrel, with their gross lees, for approximately 19 months (longer for the Bone Rock) with no rackings until the wines are prepared for bottling. Smith favors 350 and 400-liter barrels over the more standard 225/228 liter barrique. Smith selects the barrels he thinks are most expressive to site for his single-

vineyard wines, then uses the rest of the barrels, which he defines as the punchier, juicier wines, for the Broken Stones bottling, which is sourced from all of the vineyards in the Saxum lineup. My tasting ended with three barrel samples of the 2010s, another cold, late harvest. These aren't finished wines, but the quality of what I tasted was extraordinary. The first sample was a late-harvested Syrah from Bone Rock (60% whole clusters) co-fermented with 10% Roussanne that was mind-blowing. This may end up being bottled on its own. The second sample was 100% Grenache from concrete. It was full of character and dazzling. The last barrel sample was James Berry Mourvedre (from a hilltop parcel) co-fermented with a little bit of Syrah. It, too, was, full of character. If these 2010s are any indication, Justin and Heather Smith have another fabulous vintage on their hands. I will stop writing before I fill up an entire issue of The Wine Advocate, suffice it to say readers should do everything they can to taste these majestic wines.

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar, Nov/Oct 11

Rating: 93

Inky purple. Seductively perfumed aromas of dark berry preserves, potpourri, Asian spices, anise and mocha. Broad, sweet and spicy in the mouth, showing outstanding vivacity to its black and blue fruit flavors accented by clove and candied flowers. Finishes spicy and lucid. This is the first release for this bottling.