

SAXUM TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

2018 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

52% Grenache, 48% Syrah
ALC: 15.7%
Cases 750 ml: 266
Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard
Released: July 2020
Release Price: \$98
Drink: now - 2032

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

It brings me great sorrow to say that this is the last Terry Hoage we will offer. Alas Terry had to pull out our magical blocks and replant them due to a nasty virus. (Yes, vines get them too and no it wasn't Covid.) At least we are going out with a bang here. The '18 THV was brought up in half amphora and half large barrels. We wanted to preserve the essence of what makes the THV so unique. It's always such a distinct wine in our line up. I'd say it is more open for business in its youth, with a unique profile that always veers toward the Bay Leaf and watermelon side of the spectrum, super soft tannins and a long red fruit finish. I need to stop talking about this wine because I'm getting sad about the end of the line. The Hoages are the nicest people ever to work with. Buy their wines if you don't already. I have nothing but respect for them.

2018 was a perfectly normal vintage, and I don't mean that in a negative way. In farming, you want things to be normal. No crazy droughts or floods (here in Paso at least), not super cool or crazy hot, just nice and even. Letting us decide when to pick the fruit and what crop load we want the vines to have. We make the calls as opposed to mother nature making the calls for us. It produces a vintage that is strictly ours to mess up..... and we didn't. We nailed it. The 2018 vintage is very similar to the 2016s. Deep, dark, and structured, but still plenty of ripe tannins. It is another vintage that is really going to benefit from laying down for a handful of years. Drink those '17s before you drink these '18s (except for the 17 Rocket Block, hold that baby indefinitely). These '18s show tons of promise, you just need to be patient with them.

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, [JebDunnuck.com](#)

Tasting Date: 10/31/2019

Rating: 94-96

Drink: na

The 2018 Terry Hoage will be the last cuvée from this site for a few years, as the block used for this cuvée was replanted. It's a medium to full-bodied, elegant, beautifully complex barrel sample that offers lots of floral, exotic aromatics, silky tannins, a great mid-palate, and a clean, beautiful finish.

2017 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

59% Grenache, 41% Syrah
ALC: 15.4%
Cases 750 ml: 238
Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard
Released: July 2019
Release Price: \$98
Drink: now - 2030

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

I always have a soft spot for our Terry Hoage Vineyard. It is almost always the most approachable in our line up. A wine that you can enjoy while letting the others rest a bit. There's great spice from the Syrah but luscious red fruit from the Grenache. My favorite part might be the core of salinity that it displays. Maybe that doesn't sound like a tasty descriptor, but I find it fascinating and it begs you to take another sip to try and figure out where that vein is coming from.

During the 2017 growing season California was served an impressive heat wave that arrived at the wrong time, when the fruit was getting close, but definitely not there yet. We were faced with two options. Our first option was to pick the fruit that was starting to shrivel from the heat. Fruit with numbers saying the sugars were getting too high, acids were too strong, and tannins were too green. The second option was to let it ride. However, you can't predict the weather and could potentially lose the whole crop. A huge gamble. Well, we rolled the dice and let everything hang. Then we proceeded to bite our nails and watch the weather. Eventually the heat stopped and we ended up losing a portion of our crop, maybe 15%, but the remaining 85% was awesome. We had to spend a lot of time on the sorting table removing the damaged portions of the clusters, but it was all worthwhile. The wines are delicious! The 2017s definitely have a riper aromatic than the 2016s, but I rather enjoy that. The tannins are incredibly soft and smooth, making them very open and approachable in their youth. I like to think that the 2016s will ultimately be the better wines, but for the first 5, maybe 8 years of their lives, the 2017s might bring more pleasure, and bringing pleasure is what this is all about!!!

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, [JebDunnuck.com](#)

Tasting Date: 10/31/2019

Rating: 96

Drink: 2012-2031

The 2017 Terry Hoage Vineyard is a prettier, more complex wine and has lots of raspberries, blackberries, and blood orange notes to go with a medium to full-bodied, elegant profile on the palate. It was slightly more open and sexy prior to bottling, and I expect it will show more opulence with 2-3 years of bottle age.

Saxum's Justin Smith has hit a home run with these recent vintages, and his 2015s, 2016s, 2017s, and 2018s all have singular styles, with the quality remaining sky-high. The 2018s show the slightly more pure, fresh, yet concentrated style of the vintage nicely. While not yet bottled, these will offer pleasure in their youth as well as benefit from short term cellaring. The 2017s are more pretty, perfumed wines that don't quite have the density of the 2016s yet certainly don't lack for fruit. Most are

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already drinking nicely today, yet as with all great wines, they're going to evolve gracefully. Lastly, the 2016s are some of the greatest wines I've tasted from this estate, and they offer massive, layered, yet impeccably balanced profiles that are a joy to drink today; they'll also be a joy to drink in 10-15 years as well. As I've written more than once, there are few mailing lists worth being on, but without a doubt, this is one of them.

Tim Fish, Wine Spectator
Producer Spotlight, Dec. 18, 2019
Rating: 92

Drink: 2019 through 2029

Plump, vibrant and supple, with multilayered raspberry, peppery bacon fat and crushed stone accents that build structure toward polished tannins. Grenache and Syrah.

Since the brand's first vintage in 2000, Saxum has set the standard for Rhône-style reds in California, with numerous appearances on Wine Spectator's Top 100 list, including the No. 1 spot in 2010 with the Saxum James Berry Vineyard Paso Robles 2007. Owner-winemaker Justin Smith (pictured at right) grew up in Paso Robles, located halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and his father planted the 55-acre James Berry Vineyard in the early 1980s. The core of Saxum's production, James Berry Vineyard is about 10 miles from the Pacific, planted atop an ancient seabed scattered with fossilized shells and shark teeth. The latest James Berry Vineyard Willow Creek District 2017, a potent yet detailed blend, was previously featured in the Insider with a 95-point rating.

As you can see from this collection, Smith makes wine from a range of nearby vineyards, including Booker, Paderewski and Terry Hoage. Smith uses a variety of winemaking approaches, depending on the bottling and vintage, with fermentation vessels that range from concrete to large French oak puncheons, emphasizing the unique qualities of each grape and vineyard.

2016 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

43% Grenache, 43% Syrah, 14% Mataro

ALC: 15.6%

Cases 750 ml: 420

Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard

Released: July 2018

Release Price: \$98

Drink: now - 2029

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

I'm super excited to be able to release this version of our Terry Hoage Vineyard. Like many of our cuvees in 2016, this is Grenache dominant. We found the Grenache to be the super star of the vintage and wanted to preserve its purity and beauty, so we chose to age this blend primarily in 1 large oak Foudre (3000 Liters). This allowed the wine to retain its energy and precision, even though it's a ripe, juicy, fruit dominated wine.

Sticking with the theme of 16, pleasure balanced with intrigue and depth of purity.

The 2016 vintage is one of the finest, if not THE finest vintage to come around in our 17 years of Saxum. (Isn't it always true that the current vintage is the best ever?) What happened to make the 2016 wines so nice you ask? Well, what stands out to me is how even keeled the whole season was. It was a drought busting rainy winter, followed by a nice warm spring. The spring had minimal frost which in turn provided a good set of fruit and gave us the option to thin the fruit down to just the perfect clusters. To top it all off, a moderately warm, but not too hot, summer season allowed the fruit to reach optimal ripeness and retain great natural acidities. The 2016s are definitely a tad darker and denser than the 2015s. I love the 2015s for their beauty, and I love the 2016s for their pleasure. They impress with their balance, walking that razor's edge of having density and richness while still possessing depth, complexity, and mystery. Yes, I really love how many hidden layers the wines have, and how the layers are slowly revealed as you get to know the wines better throughout an evening. Maybe like a well written book that takes you ever deeper into its world, slowly revealing its true heart.

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, JebDunnuck.com

Tasting Date: 11/29/2018

Rating: 97

Drink: 2020 - 2035

The 2016 Terry Hoage Vineyard comes from Jennifer and Terry Hoage's Vineyard (of TH Estate) and is 43% each of Grenache and Syrah, with the balance Mourvèdre. This purple-hued beauty boasts a rocking bouquet of crème de cassis, smoked plums, charcoal, and damp earth, with more violets and floral notes developing with time in the glass. While a big wine, it just glides across the palate and is straight up seamless, silky, and elegant, with a weightless texture, full body, sweet tannins, and a great finish. Like the 2016s from Smith, it has ample underlying structure and density, yet the wine is so perfectly balanced it's hard to even notice. Drink this brilliant wine any time over the coming 10-15 years.

This report looks mostly at the 2016s from undeniable superstar winemaker, Justin Smith. Smith is one of the pioneers of the Paso Robles wine scene yet remains as humble and accessible as ever. Speaking about the 2016s, these are the strongest set of releases since the 2007s, and I suspect at maturity these wines will be even better. They have a rare sense of depth and richness paired with purity and precision, as well as singular characters, and these truly are special wines. The 2016 James Berry is quite possibly the greatest wine ever produced from the region and is a legendary wine in the making. Do whatever you can to latch onto a few bottles of this magical elixir. The majority of the 2016s will benefit from 2-4 years of bottle age, but good luck keeping your hands off of them. The 2017s are similarly styled, yet they have slightly more elegance and approachability compared to the denser, richer 2016s. I suspect these will continue to put on weight as well with additional time in barrel. As I've said in the past, there are few mailing lists worth staying on in today wine world; this is one of them.

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William Kelley, Wine Advocate May 2018

Rating: (93-95)

Drink: NA

The 2016 Terry Hoage Vineyard is one of the most generous, expressive wines in the range this year, bursting from the glass with aromas of ripe blackberries, smoke and dark fruit preserves. On the palate, it's full-bodied, juicy and ample, with a rich core of ripe fruit balanced by succulent acids. It's a blend of 43% Grenache, 43% Syrah and 14% Mataro, which is being matured in 23% new puncheons and the balance in foudre.

Success sometimes breeds complacency, but that's emphatically not the case for Justin Smith, whose status as Paso Roble's most celebrated winemaker has done nothing to dim his urge to experiment, evolve and improve. Without sacrificing any of their power and authority, both of which come easily in this warm climate, Smith's Saxum wines continue to gain in structural refinement, energy, integration and incipient complexity with every passing vintage. Since the end of the last decade, Smith has been experimenting with whole cluster, a technique he tends to employ in cooler sites and vintages, since extracting excessive stem tannins is a danger in riper, warmer years. Fermentations are cooler and slower, which helps to manage extraction. While new oak was once an important influence in the Saxum wines, its presence is more and more subtle: Smith now works with puncheons instead of smaller barrels, and they're complemented by amphorae and foudres. Since 2010, he has employed Roussanne for co-fermentations with Syrah in the place of Viognier, since it brings less additional power and alcohol. He also continues to refine and adapt his blends from year to year. Smith's new cellar now means he has the space necessary to mature wines for longer. Today's Saxum wines are accordingly better than ever. The only problem is finding them: I signed up for the mailing list in 2011, and Smith informs me that the current wait is around eight years.

At Saxum, Smith characterizes the 2016 vintage as "easygoing and plentiful" after the challenges of the three preceding years of drought. The season's heat spikes weren't too serious, and fermentations went well. He employed less whole cluster than in 2015 but did very little crushing, emphasizing whole-berry fermentations. Having tasted most of these wines from barrel last summer, I was more than impressed by their positive evolution when I revisited them this April.

Josh Reynolds, Vinous, Sept 2018

Rating: 96

Drink: 2025-2035

Deep lurid ruby. Powerful, mineral-accented blackberry and cherry aromas are complemented by suggestions of incense, licorice and pungent flowers. Supple, sweet and impressively concentrated, offering intense dark berry, cherry liqueur and lavender pastille flavors braced by a spine of juicy acidity and sharpened by a jolt of spicy white pepper. Plush yet surprisingly lively. Finishes on a suave floral note, showing outstanding clarity and velvety tannins that come on slowly.

2015 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

50% Syrah, 34% Grenache, 16% Mourvèdre

ALC: 15.7%

Cases 750 ml: 175

Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard

Released: July 2017

Release Price: \$98

Drink: now - 2029

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

I'm really excited about this wine. Unfortunately there's only 4 barrels to go around so count yourself lucky if you see this offering. As usual with THV, the Syrah from the own rooted meter by meter planting was fermented in barrel with 50% whole cluster. This is usually one of the first picks of the year and we were blown away by the spice. More pepper than 2011! The second pick at THV was the Grenache which we coferment with a little Mourvèdre. It was very open and red fruited with some classic THV watermelon. Putting the two lots together was magic because the crushed black pepper came through while the rich, red fruits also persisted. It is heavenly, and I can say with confidence that it's my favorite Terry Hoage wine I have ever made.

I'm still trying to wrap my mind around the 2015s. It was an anomaly of a vintage. First off, 2015 was the third consecutive drought year. The vineyards received abysmal rainfall and the vines were stressing. Due to the stress and unfavorable spring conditions, the vines set meager, and I mean MEAGER crop loads. Worst hit was the Syrah and Grenache, which unfortunately, is the bulk of what we produce. Anyways, enough belly aching over low yields.....back to the wines! The type of wine that you would expect to make from tiny yields and extended drought conditions would be massively concentrated behemoths. Thick, dark wines that you would have to smack the bottom of the bottle to get them to pour out. Surprisingly, we found the opposite type of wine when we started to press the young 2015s into barrel. Everyone stopped and scratched their heads. They are beautiful, nuanced wines! They possess the awesome spice of a cold vintage, like 2011, along with the sweet tannins of a cool, long growing season, like 2007. Hmmmmmm, what is going on? Well, here's my theory, and if anybody else has one, let me know because I'm all ears. 2015 was an unusually humid summer, something we never see here in dry Paso Robles. A monsoonal weather pattern set up, possibly due to the warm El Niño waters off the Pacific, and it culminated in mid-July with a crazy lightning storm, dumping almost three inches of rain on us. Nobody had ever seen this. Even the old farmers who have been living here for close to 90 years! Now in the vineyard, it was too early to impact the fruit because the clusters hadn't begun to color up yet. But the storm seemed to rejuvenate the stressed out vines. They perked up and started to smile. Luckily, there weren't any more freak rain events for the rest of the season and harvest went super smooth. We were able to pick when we wanted to pick and ferment exactly the way we wanted to ferment. And oh, did I mention we had a brand stinking new winery to play with!? New fermentors, new equipment, and so much glorious space! (The new place is 6 times bigger than le garage of old.) We had the ability to put the fruit inside the precise fermentor size or

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type we thought best. (Wood, concrete, or stainless steel?) And, something new to us, we could leave it there as long as we wanted to because we now had enough fermentation space for every bit of fruit. No need to turn a tank like days of old! Anyways, I'm digressing again..... the wines! Downright beautiful (this is the word of the day). They are open and aromatic, the tannins are soft and supple, they are layered and nuanced beyond all belief. They are already enjoyable. You can drink them while waiting for the 14s to come around. Probably even the 13s and 12s for that matter! On the other hand, I believe they will age magnificently. The balance is perfect.

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, JebDunnuck.com

Tasting Date: 8/10/2017

Rating: 94

Drink: n/a

The 2015 Terry Hoage Vineyard, which had just been bottled at the time of this tasting, is a blend of 50% Syrah, 34% Grenache, and 16% Mourvèdre. It sports a medium-ruby color as well as a classic Hoage vineyard perfume of flowers, cranberries, violets and assorted red and black fruits. This cuvée always has a tropical-slant to its fruit and is medium to full-bodied in 2015, with sweet, supple tannin, plenty of glycerol, no hard edges and a supple, forward yet balanced style. Drink it over the coming decade. It's not going to make you forget the 2014, but is still a beautiful, singular wine.

I've raved so much about the wines from Saxum's Justin Smith, I feel like a broken record every new vintage. Nevertheless, these latest vintages are all stellar, and certainly the move to the new cellar hasn't affect or changed the quality here. The 2014s show the richer, more fleshy style of the vintage, yet still carry the slightly more streamlined/elegant style that Smith has chosen over the past few years. The 2015s play even more in that realm, which is very much the vintage, and are lively and elegant, with pretty, perfumed characters – and plenty of fruit. The 2015s share a lot of similarities to the 2011s (which shined for their aromatics), yet have more fruit and power. It's worth noting that the majority had just been recently bottled, which makes these showings even more impressive. A vintage that really excites me is the 2016s, which appear to be a return to a more bombastic style, with beautiful fruit and texture.

Josh Reynolds, Vinous, Nov 2017

Rating: 96

Drink: 2022-2032

Dark purple. A powerfully scented, complex bouquet displays mineral-accented boysenberry, cherry pie, licorice, five-spice powder and smoky mineral aromas that expand with air. Stains the palate with sweet, deeply concentrated red and blue fruit, spicecake and candied violet flavors that show a surprisingly graceful touch. Velvety, slow-building tannins gently shape a broad, smoky finish, which hangs on with superb, floral-driven tenacity.

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Sept 2017

Rating: 96

Drink: 2017-2032

Blended of 50% Syrah, 34% Grenache and 16% Mourvèdre, the 2015 Terry Hoage Vineyard has a medium to deep garnet-purple color and a lovely red fruit-dominant nose of red currants and cherries with hints of blackberries, mulberries, charcuterie and spice box, plus a touch of black olives. Full-bodied, firm and fine in the mouth, it has lovely vibrant red and black fruits with plenty of pepper, spice flavors and a good long finish.

2014 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

48% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 22% Mourvèdre

ALC: 15%

Cases 750 ml: 345

Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard

Released: January 2017

Release Price: \$98

Drink: now - 2028

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The growing season of 2014 was so dry that it is the defining feature of these wines. You can tell the vines struggled to squeeze every last drop of available moisture out of their bed of rocks that we like to call our soil. The wines are tightly wound and concentrated, but in a different way than the 2013s, more stoney is how I perceive them. Wet stones and chalk, minerality, spices, and then the core of fruit. The tannins are more refined, or transparent, than the monster tannins of '13 or '12. These wines remind me of the 2010s, which never had huge tannins, but have evolved very slowly, taking their damn sweet time to really strut their stuff. They should be ready to enjoy in a year or two but I think they will show best in a decade.

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, JebDunnuck.com

Tasting Date: 8/10/2017

Rating: 97

Drink: n/a

A similar blend to the 2015, the 2014 Terry Hoage Vineyard (48% Syrah, 30% Grenache and 22% Mourvèdre) is a deeper, richer wine that offers sensational notes of blackberries, currants, pepper, crushed violets and hints of graphite. Deep, rich and layered, yet light on its feet as well as elegant and graceful, this sensational 2014 has sweet tannin, good acidity and a big finish. Give bottles a year or two (it's great today as well) and enjoy through 2028.

I've raved so much about the wines from Saxum's Justin Smith, I feel like a broken record every new vintage. Nevertheless, these latest vintages are all stellar, and certainly the move to the new cellar hasn't affect or changed the quality here. The 2014s show the richer, more fleshy style of the vintage, yet still carry the slightly more streamlined/elegant style that Smith has chosen over the past few years. The 2015s play even more in that realm, which is very much the vintage, and are lively and elegant, with pretty, perfumed characters – and plenty of fruit. The 2015s share a lot of similarities to the 2011s (which shined

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for their aromatics), yet have more fruit and power. It's worth noting that the majority had just been recently bottled, which makes these showings even more impressive. A vintage that really excites me is the 2016s, which appear to be a return to a more bombastic style, with beautiful fruit and texture.

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Sept 2017

Rating: 96

Drink: 2017-2032

Blended of 48% Syrah, 30% Grenache and 22% Mourvèdre, the 2014 Terry Hoage Vineyard has a medium to deep garnet-purple color and slightly reticent nose of red currants and raspberry leaves with suggestions of black pepper, fragrant earth and mossy bark, with a hint of pencil lead. Medium to full-bodied, tightly wound and with fairly restrained, earthy/savory flavors, it has beautifully ripe tannins and a nice long refreshing finish.

Josh Reynolds, Vinous, Sept 2017

Rating: 95

Drink: 2022-2031

Bright purple. Heady aromas of blackberry, cherry-cola and incense, along with subtle vanilla and Indian spice elements that build steadily with air. Sappy and broad on the palate, offering deeply concentrated yet lively dark berry liqueur, spicecake and floral pastille flavors that pick up a mineral flourish on the back half. At once impressively rich and energetic, with an extremely long, gently tannic finish that shows excellent clarity and spicy thrust.

2013 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

57% Syrah, 29% Grenache, 14% Mourvèdre

ALC: 14.8%

Cases 750 ml: 300

Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard

Released: July 2015

Release Price: \$98

Drink: now - 2026

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

I think this is one of the, if not THE best vintage we have ever had. There are some vintages that are more of this or more of that, but the '13s have a bit of everything. Concentration, but not super rich (hello '14s!), soft tannins but still some grip, great fresh acids but nothing searing or flabby, depth, depth, and more depth, they are as a whole wines that continue to evolve in the glass for days, every sip revealing something new, something that was hidden the previous sip. They will definitely reward a few years of cellaring but will be very enjoyable in the short term.

The Terry Hoage Vineyard bottling continues to be the bottling I grab to enjoy while I let the others slumber. It is just plain delish right out of the gates and this 2013 rendition is no exception. For me its all about soft tannin and rich fruit but no heaviness at all, it's almost delicate. Lots of red fruits, black berry and some sage notes, but the one characteristic that I ALWAYS get from THV, and maybe some of you have noticed this too (or maybe

I'm just crazy?) is watermelon, specifically as you're eating down towards the rind. Yeah, now that I'm typing this I realize I'm probably just crazy.....anyways! It's a pleaser, watermelon rind or not, it's just plain pleasurable to drink.

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, Wine Advocate #226 Issue: Aug 2016

Rating: 96

Drink: 2018-2026

Lastly, the 2013 Terry Hoage Vineyard is a forward, exotic effort that's made from 57% Syrah, 29% Grenache and 14% Mourvèdre. It is one of the more fresh and lively wines in the lineup, with notes of passion fruits, jolly rancher, plums, spice and green herbs (Justin always finds a touch of watermelon rind from this site). This beauty is full-bodied, silky and beautifully textured on the palate, with impeccable balance and a great finish. Drink this puppy anytime over the coming decade or so.

One of the superstars in California is undoubtedly the humble, soft spoken, yet incredibly talented Justin Smith, who has had the reins at Saxum since 2000. And while a lot of winemakers would have been content to stick with the tried and true at this point, Smith continues to question, experiment and fine tune everything he does. Today, his wines are much more finesse oriented, pure and graceful than in the past, without sacrificing texture, concentration or richness. In short, these wines kick ass and shouldn't be missed by any serious wine lover out there!

Wine Spectator, Issue: February 29, 2016

Rating: 94

Drink: now through 2026

Intensely structured yet balanced and richly textured. Floral blueberry and violet aromas are paired with complex, exuberant flavors of boysenberry, raspberry, cracked pepper and loamy mineral. Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre.

Josh Reynolds, Vinous, Sept 2015

Rating: 93

Drink: 2020-2026

Inky ruby. A wild, highly perfumed bouquet evokes ripe red fruits, sandalwood, vanilla and smoky minerals, with a suave floral pastille nuance coming up with air. Broad, seamless and sweet on the palate, offering intense black raspberry and lavender flavors and a deeper suggestion of bitter chocolate. Energetic and deep, with no excess fat. Finishes with superb clarity and persistence, leaving a sweet red fruit liqueur note behind.

2012 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

51% Syrah, 31% Grenache, 18% Mourvèdre

ALC: 15.2%

Cases 750 ml: 330

Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard

Released: July 2014

Release Price: \$98

Drink: now - 2026

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

2012 was the only normal season we have had in quite awhile. Not chilly like '10 and '11, not dry like '13 was or '14 will be. It

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was completely average. I don't mean that in a bad way either. I just mean we had an average amount of rainfall, an average temperature range, and an average crop-load. It was actually quite nice working with an average season. But what I have come to realize after farming here for, well, for a long time, is that average seasons are quite rare, and not normal at all! I always get a kick out of our European counterparts' misconception that California farming is so boring because every season is exactly the same. Au contraire!

The wines from 2012 are really growing on me. I have to admit that initially, right after putting them into barrel, I was a little perplexed with what I tasted. They didn't have the sweet flesh that I was expecting from the warmer season. What I tasted was more akin to a cross of '10s and '09s. Great dark chalky tannins, like the '10s, but definitely more ripe aromatics like the '09s. However now, as I taste them, they keep gaining more and more flesh. They just took their sweet time showing off the fruit driven side to them. It is quite peculiar, which leads me to believe these wines will only keep getting better and better as they evolve in the bottle and will reward some patience.

I'm so glad we have the Terry Hoage wine in our line up! It is always ready to go, straight out of the chute. We recommend drinking this wine while you are waiting for the other two. Sweet juicy strawberry pie with great acidity, freshness, and a nice tannic core. This is a wine that makes you want another sip, and another and another...

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, Wine Advocate #214 Issue: Aug 2014

Rating: 97

Drink: 2014-2026

Just bottled five weeks ago, the 2012 Terry Hoage Vineyard (330 cases) is a thrilling blend of 51% Syrah, 31% Grenache and 18% Mourvedre. It has an up front approachable and sexy feel in its cherry blossom and black raspberry fruit, crushed flowers and spice aromas and flavors. Full-bodied, concentrated and with sweet tannin, it's the most ready-to-go in the lineup, yet will still have 10-12 years of longevity.

This was another great visit with Justin Smith, and he continues to tweak and experiment with varying degrees of whole cluster and concrete, puncheon and barrel aging regimes. Looking at his 2011s, I was able to taste all of these from bottles in Colorado, and they've closed down substantially since I reviewed them from barrel. In most cases, these took a day or more to fully unwind, and the style here is much more Rhone-like, with spice, pepper and meaty aromatics paired with focused, firm palate profiles. These are gorgeous wine that won't start to show their full potential for another 3-4 years. The 2012s are just as good, if not better, yet are surprisingly tannic and structured. Given the up-front nature of the vintage, I was surprised by the tannin profile and more reserved style in most of the wines. Nevertheless, the concentration level here is on par with, if not slightly greater than, the 2011s, and they show the fabulous purity and focus of the vintage. Both of these vintages will need short-term cellaring. My favorite of the three vintages reviewed here, the 2013s offer thrilling density of fruit, massive concentration, and sound underlying structure that

keeps the wines focused and balanced. I think short-term cellaring will be helpful here as well, but I wouldn't be afraid to crack a bottle or two on release either. Despite these vintage differences, as I hope the reviews and scores show, these are incredible wines that make the most of this special terroir. Truthfully, there are few mailing lists out there worth being on, but without a doubt, this is one of them.

2011 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

51% Grenache, 49% Syrah

ALC: 15.3%

Cases 750 ml: 120

Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard

Released: August 2013

Release Price: \$89

Drink: now - 2021

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The yields were very shy here in 2011 and I only got enough fruit to fill 3 puncheons of wine. I wish I had more, because I really like how this wine turned out. I've never grilled plums on my BBQ, but I have wrapped our figs in prosciutto and grilled them, and yes, that is what this wine reminds me of. The THV has really taken shape as a wine defined by its lightness and depth, I know, two contrasting elements, but they are both so present. This is what I think Terry Hoage must of been like on the field, fast and nimble, but able to take your head off without a second thought.

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, Wine Advocate #214 Issue: Aug 2014

Rating: 95

Drink: 2014-2024

More approachable and a sexy, seamless and layered effort, the 2011 Terry Hoage Vineyard (51% Grenache and 49% Syrah) has a distinct floral quality to go with fabulous creme de cassis, black raspberry, violets and licorice aromas and flavors. Possessing full-bodied richness and an elegant, focused and pure style, it benefits from a decant if drinking anytime soon, and will have over a decade of longevity.

This was another great visit with Justin Smith, and he continues to tweak and experiment with varying degrees of whole cluster and concrete, puncheon and barrel aging regimes. Looking at his 2011s, I was able to taste all of these from bottles in Colorado, and they've closed down substantially since I reviewed them from barrel. In most cases, these took a day or more to fully unwind, and the style here is much more Rhone-like, with spice, pepper and meaty aromatics paired with focused, firm palate profiles. These are gorgeous wine that won't start to show their full potential for another 3-4 years. The 2012s are just as good, if not better, yet are surprisingly tannic and structured. Given the up-front nature of the vintage, I was surprised by the tannin profile and more reserved style in most of the wines. Nevertheless, the concentration level here is on par with, if not slightly greater than, the 2011s, and they show the fabulous purity and focus of the vintage. Both of these vintages will need short-term cellaring. My favorite of the three

SAXUM TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

vintages reviewed here, the 2013s offer thrilling density of fruit, massive concentration, and sound underlying structure that keeps the wines focused and balanced. I think short-term cellaring will be helpful here as well, but I wouldn't be afraid to crack a bottle or two on release either. Despite these vintage differences, as I hope the reviews and scores show, these are incredible wines that make the most of this special terroir. Truthfully, there are few mailing lists out there worth being on, but without a doubt, this is one of them.

James Laube, Wine Spectator, Issue: Feb 28, 2014

Rating: 90

Drink: now through 2023

A rugged blend shaped by firm, drying, grainy tannins, this features a fruit profile of rich dark berry, raspberry and touches of berry jam, with spice and cedar accents. Ends with chewy tannins. Grenache and Syrah.

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar Nov/Dec 2013

Rating: 93

Opaque ruby. Highly expressive scents of red- and blackcurrant, cherry, smoky minerals, licorice and flowers. Fresh and precise but deeply concentrated, with sweet red berry compote and cassis flavors, supple texture and an exotic floral pastille quality. Becomes spicier with air and finishes pliant and long, with subtle tannins and a whiplash of peppery spices.

Antonio Galloni, Vinous, Aug 2014

Rating: 95

Drink: 2015-2023

Another gorgeous wine, the 2011 Terry Hoage Vineyard is especially supple and resonant for the year. Dark red cherries, kirsch, cinnamon and new leather are all woven together in a brilliant, wine built on texture, energy and nuance. The Terry Hoage is 51% Grenache and 49% Syrah, done mostly with destemmed fruit and aged predominantly in puncheons. Proprietor Justin Smith has done a magnificent job with his 2011s. Now that the wines are in bottle, they are every bit as impressive as they were from barrel. Readers who can still find the 2011s should not hesitate, as they are magnificent.

2010 TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

46% Syrah, 33% Grenache, 21% Mourvèdre

ALC: 15.1%

Cases 750 ml: 400

Vineyard: Terry Hoage Vineyard

Released: August 2012

Release Price: \$89

Drink: now - 2021

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The Terry Hoage Vineyard is owned and farmed by Jennifer and Terry Hoage, a couple of wonderful people carving out their lives here in the Templeton Hills, and producing some of Paso Robles' finest fruit and best wines. Located close to the intersection of Kiler Canyon and Arbor Road, the vineyard is a series of rolling hillsides with a beautiful bass pond between the

hills where dragon flies abound. We source our fruit from a couple different blocks here, the oldest is a South West facing Syrah block that was planted in 1994 with the local favorite Estrella clone, it yields a very red fruit driven flavor profile, with superb structure. Across the pond and higher up the hillside sits the Grenache block with a similar exposition, the fruit seems to always be incredibly concentrated but still retains nice bright acidity and really adds lift to the blend. Behind that is my favorite little section of Syrah. Terry somehow agreed to plant this block at the super high density of 1 Meter by 1 Meter, without any rootstock, on a steep North facing section. Of course he has to do all the work by hand. Thankfully Terry is an ex-professional football player who enjoys pain. The very small amount of fruit that comes off this block is fermented in open top puncheons without de-stemming. It is wildly spicy and dark, with a real teriyaki beef jerky component that I absolutely love. When all the components come together they make a truly unique expression of Paso Robles terroir, light on its feet but still packed to the brim with character and intensity.

REVIEWS:

Antonio Galloni, Wine Advocate #202, Aug 2012

Rating: 94+

Drink: 2014-2020

Here in its first vintage, the 2010 Terry Hoage Vineyard bursts onto the palate with rich, dark fruit. The weight power and richness of Syrah comes through beautifully in the layered, sumptuous wine. Flowers, licorice, mint, tobacco and grilled herbs wrap around the finish. The 2010 boasts serious density and fabulous overall balance. It is terrific first effort. The blend is 46% Syrah, 33% Grenache and 21% Mourvedre. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2020.

I have been looking forward to tasting the Saxum 2010s since I saw several component wines from barrel last year. Justin and Heather Smith, along with Eric Jensen at Booker, Matt Trevisan and Linne-Calodo, Cris Cherry at Villa Creek and a handful of other growers, represent the cutting edge of the adventurous, pioneering spirit that is the essence of Paso Robles, and also in many ways, the heart of what makes the United States a great country. Take it from someone who spends a lot of time in Europe every year, this level of ambition is rare in the world. Saxum fans will be thrilled to learn that with the 2010 vintage Justin and Heather Smith have introduced a new wine to their lineup, the Syrah-based Terry Hoage Vineyard. For the last few years, Hoage fruit has found its way into the Bone Rock, but 2010 is the first year the Smiths had enough fruit to warrant a separate bottling. Justin Smith describes 2010 as the coldest year he had ever seen, until 2011. Although 2010 was a cold year, Smith says he still got the ripeness levels he looks for, it just took a lot more time because the growing season turned out to be very long. In 2011, however, ripeness levels never reached the typical range here, and consequently the wines are all about 1% lower in alcohol. The 2010 vintage also signals a bit of a stylistic shift at Saxum. Concrete tanks were first introduced with the 2009 vintage, but in 2010 about 50% of the fruit was fermented in concrete, while the Grenache for the James Berry Vineyard bottling was vinified and aged partly in concrete. In 2011, Smith added one more concrete tank, for the Heart Stone, the first Saxum wine to be vinified and aged exclusively in

SAXUM TERRY HOAGE VINEYARD

concrete. The 2010 Terry Hoage, Paderewski and James Berry were bottled in late May 2012, while the remainder of the wines were scheduled to be bottled in August 2012.

Jeb Dunnuck, The Rhone Report, Issue 12, June 2012

Rating: 95-98

I was blown away by the 2010 Saxum Terry Hoage Vineyard. The first vintage for this release, it is surprisingly old world in style and possesses a savory, classic aromatic profile of black fruits, duck fat, pepper, violets, and charcoal to go with a full-bodied, gorgeously textured palate. Fairly unique in the lineup for its gamy notes, this is pure Saxum on the palate and shows loads of fruit, yet still, the 2010 vintage shines brightly here and the wine has no shortage of focus, tannin, and length. As with the other 2010, I can't imagine this not benefiting from short term cellaring and 10-15 years of prime drinking is certainly not out of the question here. Thrilling stuff and I can't wait to see how this shows from bottle.

James Laube, Wine Spectator, Issue: Web Only 2013

Rating: 93

Drink: now through 2022

Intense and detailed, exhibiting a crushed rock backbone and tannic structure, with dark berry, licorice and floral scents. This is very tightly wound and sure to benefit from cellaring. Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2022. 400 cases made.

Josh Raynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar Nov/Dec 2012

Rating: 94

Vivid ruby. Seductive, highly perfumed nose displays strikingly pure raspberry and floral aromas. Fleshy red and dark berry flavors are enlivened by intriguing blood orange and floral pastille accents and become spicier with air. Picks up a suggestion of mocha on the finish, which is impressively focused, balanced and long.