



T A S T I N G N O T E S

BEHIND THE WINES

Dark Star Cellars was established in 1994 in the Templeton Gap area on the Westside of the Paso Robles appellation. Our wineries annual production of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, Syrah, and our meritage blend, Ricordati, hovers around 4,000 cases.

Our focus is on producing small lots of ultra-premium hand crafted red wine. We feel our success comes from a gentle treatment of our wines from harvest to bottling, and from the strong respect we have for our growers. At Dark Star we believe great wines begin in the vineyard.

To that end, our grapes are harvested into small half-ton bins, crushed, and fermented in vessels that are designed to maximize the "skin-to-juice" ratio during fermentation, there by increasing the characteristics of the wine. After fermentation our dedication to "synthetic gravity", the use of low pressure pneumatic wine pumps and nitrogen racking, allows each wine to be gently moved from one stage of it's life to another, ultimately allowing each wine to reach it's fullest potential.

BEHIND THE LABEL

Our winemaker, Norm Benson, chose "Dark Star", because it symbolized his goal of producing "stellar" red wines, or dark stars. The three paneled "Angeli d'Altri Tempi"; "angels from other times", symbolizes the people in our lives who have left an "imprint" on our personality and our values. Their influence, collectively, make us who we are today. The three panels that encase the dark star symbolize the past, the present, and the future. We believe we must never under-value or forget the positive influence people have had on our lives in the past and we must not take for granted the help and support we receive from the people in our "present" lives. And of course, the mystery of whom we will meet in our future.

At Dark Star, we feel a strong connection with our history as a family. "Ricordati" (Re-core-dot-tay), "Always Remember", is a delicate blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc and began as a tribute to Norm's father who had been in the beverage business since the early 1950's. Norm laments the fact that his father was unable to witness the establishment of Dark Star Cellars and it's wines. Ricordati has now evolved into our "flagship" wine that celebrates the fond memory of all of our friends and family who are no longer with us.

2001 MERLOT

**95% MERLOT
5% CABERNET SAUVIGNON**

Both the Cabernet and Merlot for this stellar Merlot were grown on the Cougar Ridge vineyard located in the Adelaida Hills on the West Side of Paso Robles and the Owl Ridge vineyard on the East Side

546 cases produced

**13.6% a/v / 3.50 pH /
.074 TA / .030 RS**

WINEMAKER NOTES

The 2001 growing season was somewhat "classical" Central Coast. Little rain, 90-degree days and 50-degree nights. Berry weight and cluster size were normal creating a classic vintage of deep color and aromas.

For me, this Merlot exhibits plum, white pepper, strawberry jam, and maple syrup. This is one of the finest Merlots we have ever produced

We hope you enjoy our efforts.

Norm Benson, winemaker

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