The third in a trio of great vintages for Paso Robles, 2014 is an especially dense and extracted vintage for Tower Road Petite Sirah. With less than half of the usual winter rainfall in the ground, spring growth rocketed as degree days racked up at a faster pace than we've seen in a decade. A somewhat warm veraison period at the end of July pushed tannin levels upward and led to the earliest picking dates on record for most of our vineyard blocks. Achieving sugar ripeness was never in question in this warm vintage, but we certainly benefitted from the J. Lohr “early water deficit” farming practices that hasten seed ripeness and achieve early phenolic maturity.

In the vineyards surrounding Tower Road, in the Estrella and San Miguel districts of Paso Robles, our Petite Sirah thrives on the well-drained yet heavier clay soils of the area. The rarity of autumn rains in Paso Robles allows this tight-clustered variety to reach full maturity almost every year, without the risk of bunch-rot that exists in damper regions of the state and in Europe. Our ripening program requires that we apply netting to the vines in August to assure that birds don’t overfeed on this especially flavorful grape before harvest. Intense summer sun and very warm daytime temperatures in Paso Robles are balanced by the gentle afternoon breezes that creep in from the Monterey Bay to the north and from the Templeton Gap to the west. These winds cool the area by as much as fifty degrees by early morning, preserving the acidity and bright fruit character of our Petite Sirah.

Inviting aromas of blackberry and a bouquet of hazelnut from French oak aging are followed by juicy flavors of ollalieberry on the palate. Petite Sirah is known for bold astringency and the 2014 Tower Road doesn’t disappoint.

—Steve Peck, red winemaker

Pairs well with aromatic herbs and pan-seared meat dishes such as rosemary lamb chops with roasted fennel.

VINTAGE

VINEYARDS

WINEMAKER’S COMMENTS

FOOD PAIRINGS