



2008 was the second year of drought with only 9 inches of rainfall in northwestern Santa Barbara County. The vines started and ended the season with depleted soil moisture. The canopies were small and the fruit carried by the vines was very light. In addition, frost damage in the spring forced us to drop a portion of crop that resulted from canes that emerged after the frost because of that fruit's delayed flavor development. In the face of adversity, the low yields with tiny cluster and berry size resulted in concentrated, richly flavored wine.

“Flee—if you can.” The headwaters of Santa Barbara County's Salsipuedes Canyon begin a few miles northeast of Point Concepción. This maritime influenced drainage flows north as a tributary to the Santa Ynez River. The name Salsipuedes originated as a warning and traces back to mounted banditos whom preyed upon early California travelers on the way between Mission La Purisima Concepción and Gaviota. Those using the Gaviota pass often found the longer inland route along the Santa Ynez River and Nojouti Creek was a safer passage.

For the 2008 Point Concepción Salsipuedes, we selected from the most fruit-forward and approachable barrels of our Cargasacchi-Jalama vineyard production, that were not vineyard designated for the Cargasacchi label. But, in a vintage characterized by low yields and concentration, this is not your typical fruit bomb. The nose is bright with tealeaf and wild berry fruit, however depending on your mood; it can show a hint of sage and even violets. In tasting, the fruit's character is ripe, juicy and upfront amid black cherry, blackberry and plum flavors that are mouth coating and full bodied with a core of mineral and chewy texture underneath.

The tannins are big and earthy, showing characteristics of white pepper that is typically exhibited by fruit from this vineyard every vintage, along with sweet leather and spicy crimson tea in the long finish. Though fruity and upfront there is a firm undercurrent of structure to this wine that is complex and adds to its enjoyment.

In all its opulent fruit-forward character, flavor and richness, this is a bottle to open and drink by itself. Nevertheless, the structure behind this wine will make you want to pop and pour it with a nice steak, cut of lamb or other rich food. Enjoy!

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