



Appellation: Santa Cruz Mountains
Vineyard: Bates Ranch
Cases Produced: 565

“Now that’s wine” was my first impression of the 2003 Bates Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon. It hit me like a ton of bricks. The Bates Ranch is faithful; year after year this vineyard shows its true self. This fruit-forward wine has hints of the subtle earth and a balance of acid-tannin structure that sings in the mouth. Although it will age 5 to 7 years easily, you might just want to drink it now because it is too good to sit around.

2003 was a low yielding vintage, which translates into intense complexity and concentration of this wine. The 18 months in American oak provide warm vanilla and toasty oak notes to soften the acid backbone. From conception this wine was destined for big things. I recall a conversation that went on in late October about how long we should wait to pick the vineyard. Usually all of the grapes are harvested by this time, but not Byington. We waited until the vineyard was ready, and that meant that the Bates Ranch fruit hung until early November. At this time of year you risk being able to get into the vineyard to harvest, thanks to the Santa Cruz Mountains rains. A 1000 ft climb over a half a mile and it is dangerously steep. I’m glad that Ernesto, our capable and experienced Vineyard Manager, was behind the wheel of the truck hauling out these grapes. Otherwise you might not have seen this wine at all.

The time has come to enjoy this delicacy of the Santa Cruz Mountains, so stock up because it is worth holding onto. Buy now or forever hold your peace; this wine is excellent.