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Jonata Jonata Duo "2005 El Alma and El Desafio"

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Robert Parker
Jonata 2005 El Alma de Jonata



Robert Parker
Jonata 2005 El Desafio de Jonata



Jonata 2005 El Alma de Jonata

Overview:

Explosive aromatic attack of dark chocolate, tobacco leaf, black raspberry, toasty oak and asian spice. Massively rich and round mid palate with swirling layers of sweet black fruit, vanilla, pencil shavings and herbal notes. Shows influence of petit verdot addition with meaty characters and brooding structure. Well balanced acidity. The tannins are abundant and fine grained, showing a promising future for those with the patience for prolonged cellaring. Cassis and toasty oak linger on the finish.

Muhammad Ali proclaimed himself the greatest, and went on to prove it true. The 2005 El Alma de Jonata takes a more retiring approach; it lets other people proclaim it one of the greatest Cabernet Francs to come out of California. Jonata's lucky. For Screaming Eagle's sister winery, there's no need to shout. It's not that El Alma is shy. If life were a party, then Cabernet Franc would not be a wallflower. It would be on the dance floor, showing its lines in everything from an elegant waltz to a defiantly sensuous tango. El Alma won't be the first guest to leave, either. Toasty oak and deep cassis notes linger. From the start, this wine shows off the best of Cabernet Franc, with ripe plums, the warmth of vanilla, tobacco, violets, dark chocolate, exotic spices, fresh bell pepper, licorice, and herbs.

El Alma is 95% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. The Cabernet Sauvignon contributes black currants, a hint of the cigar box, and leather, and gives El Alma its potential for truly excellent ageing. If you have a cellar, then clear some space. El Alma will reward patience. If you're in a hurry to get this fine wine in your glass, then don't be afraid to pair it with food. El Alma is a sociable wine, ready to share a table with game, grilled fish, red meat, roasts, goat's cheese – even pizza. Or just grab a glass and a bottle, find a comfortable chair, and sit and savor the best of times.

Jonata 2005 El Desafio de Jonata

Overview:

Exhibiting a lifted nose that jumps out of the glass with piercing red fruit that mingles with black fruit and a complex combination of cigar box, exotic spices, herbal notes and toasty oak. Sweet black fruit and dusty earth explode in the mouth and move seamlessly to a finish with classic powerfully structured cabernet tannins. Very closed, young and tight. Benefit from extended cellaring/decanting to fully exhibit the full array of its power.

In Portuguese, "desafio" means "challenge". When it comes to Jonata Winery's El Desafio, the only challenge is deciding how much to buy. If you haven't heard about Jonata, that's because the winery doesn't pour money into publicity. As at Screaming Eagle, Jonata's older sibling, it's all about the wine.

Jonata's winemaker Matt Dees travelled an earthy road to winemaking. The Kansas City native has a degree in soil science from the University of Vermont. Jonata (Say "ho-natta".) gives him plenty to play with: almost 600 hilly acres in California's Santa Ynez Valley. Eighty acres have been planted; each has its own microclimate and soil profile.

Love doesn't start in the cellar. Jonata's wines are nurtured from the root up. Its full name – El Desafio de Jonata Cabernet Sauvignon – makes it sound pretty fancy, but Jonata's 2005 Desafio is an approachable wine. Bring it to the table with braised meats (perfect fall dishes), osso buco, risotto, roasts . . . It complements oregano, basil, bay, onions, and garlic – think of roasted chickens or long-simmered stews.

It's a classic blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot. When you first see its deep purple hue, you may have an urge to dip a pen and start writing love letters, but save the wine for drinking. It has Old World balance, with a nose of blackberries, rich woodland loam, crème de cassis, spices, and herbs. In the mouth, El Desafio will reward you with rich oak, black fruits, and classic Old World Cabernet tannins. Decant it to encourage those flavors to open out, or give it time in a cellar. With up to 15 years of good drinking in its future, this is a wine to invest in.