



Dear **True Believers**,

Rosé is a barefoot-on-the-grass-listening-to-your-favorite-song-springtime-in-a-glass magical elixir. When good, it has the unique ability to facilitate positive, memorable experiences, particularly during summer and late-spring. It can make fun times funner and funnier. Tired of taking yourself so seriously? Pair your Spotify to your block rocker, pack a picnic lunch, and head out into your favorite natural spot and share (generously and responsibly, of course - we are True Believers, after all) a bottle of good, cool, dry **rosé** with some friends and chillax. If you are drinking hWa's venerable **El Crüe**, savor the Grenache-dominated potpourri goodness while taking in the fresh air. If you are *not* able to be out in nature while enjoying, close your eyes, and inhale deeply... and go there in your mind. Just like Luke Bryan. Smell the **garden** and the **tropical fruits** and **berries**! Keep stocked-up on your favorites like Rick Cooper does, and give a friend a bottle or two. Make it a thing. Be happy. Buy other people's **rosé**. Herman Story makes great **rosé**. Epoch makes better **rosé** than us, according to some respectable folks from AZ. Buy that, too. Lovely, delicious Tavel, and solid dry **pink wines** from other serious areas can be had for 15-25 bucks readily. They can be wonderful. That's why we drink it. That's why we make it.

Grenache is a natural for **pink wines**. I once heard that Grenache delivers what Pinot Noir promises. I'm a Pinot guy *and* a Grenache guy (or, as the great Willie Nelson says, "why do I have to choose?"), so I don't know about that. But, with **rosé**, it's hard to argue against *La Reina Garnacha*.

Being a relatively newbie to this side of the business, I'm still fascinated at the amazing process that is wine-making. May I share with you our secret methods? Don't tell...

1. When the vineyard is at an average of about 21-23 brix, we expertly-harvest (using a simple visual assessment of each plant) all of the "greener" vines that, for whatever reason didn't slow their vegetative growth down soon enough to make it into True Believer, perhaps 5-7% of the vineyard, mostly Grenache. We press them and ferment the juice in neutral 228L barriques. This leaves the remaining grapes to ripen evenly, arriving at their next destination (the winery) a couple of weeks later, *si Dios quiere*, full of concentrated goodness. These earlier-harvested grapes are high in acid, and form the backbone for the **El Crüe**. The color of the juice is light pink. When fermentation kicks-off, the wine smells like fresh flowers and mangoes. It's a great smell.
2. As mentioned, a few days later we begin bringing in the grapes for **True Believer**. They go into a cooler overnight to get the temp down to 38-40 deg. The next morning they are destemmed (or not), and then go into a fermentation vessel of some sort. From there, I stomp them up and then may "bleed" (quickly, so as not to soak up too much color) up to 10% of the juice into similar 228L barrels to those mentioned above, and ferment them in the same fashion as the pressed grapes. This riper, "bled" juice is darker pink than the press, and rounder and more voluptuous. It smells more like guava and raspberry during ferment.
3. When the wine finishes fermenting, it is all consolidated into what is now about 5-6 barrels, and then aged for another 4 months before being bottled.

The 2017 **El Crüe Rosé** of **True Believer** was bottled in February. The varietal breakdown is: Grenache 54%, Syrah 31%, Mourvèdre 12%, Viognier 2%, Roussanne 1%.

By the way, did you know that **hWa/True Believer** was conceived/began 10 years ago? It took a lot of planning and planting before we were able to offer you our first vintage (the '11) in 2014. Thank you for building this brand with us. And thanks, especially, to Dayna Hammell, who, as long-time **True Believers** know, handles all of the business, sales, customer service, hospitality, compliance and shipping for us. Basically, everything aside from farming, wine-making and letter-writing. She does all of this while managing our family and deftly maintaining her own daunting schedule. She is truly irreplaceable for someone like me. Thank you also to my partners, The Miller Family and the staff at **Bien Nacido and Solomon Hills Vineyards** who help me so much in the vineyard and winery. Thanks to Trey, Anthony and Matt, who have saved my novice @\$\$ more times than I can remember. And thanks to E&K and their many loyal followers. They are the greatest of the greats, in my book, and I've had the good fortune to meet a lot of great people! There are many, many others. That's why it's called the **Hammell Wine ALLIANCE**. **True Believer** is my *idea*, but I can't do it alone. And, although I may have driven those close to me semi-crazy at times while trying to make this thing go, may I say to all of the fine people mentioned above, to **you**, and to the countless, unmentioned others that have helped along the way,

THANK YOU. I APPRECIATE YOU ALL.

Interesting Upcoming Stuff:

- We're embracing Biodynamics more, because I believe in it
- We're switching over to a Wine Club Format before the fall release to make things simpler, and improve your experience
- We're building a new website that should be pretty interesting
- We have a new wine to tell you about soon
- You can follow me now on Insta (@truevigneron)

Thank you for helping us build the True Believer Brand

Respect,

Chris

P.S. We are going to be at **Hospice Du Rhone** in Paso Robles this month. If you've not been, and are a fan of wine events, I can tell you that this one is like no other. www.hospicedurhone.org

P.P.S. Have you been to **The girl & the fig** restaurant in beautiful Sonoma? If so, then you know how awesome it is. If not, you may wish to visit. It's one of the coolest restaurants California, and is run by one of our industry's shiniest stars. And they are *IN LOVE* with the Rhone. Like us. www.thegirlandthefig.com. We are in a couple of killer restaurants in SoCal as well. More about them next time...

Please have a delightful weekend, and don't hesitate to reach out with questions or comments. It's just Dayna & me, so thanks for being patient. We'll be at the Dodger game this weekend celebrating Weston Hammell's 18th birthday. 81 degree forecast. Rose weather!