

# THE RHÔNE PROGRAM



While a doctoral student at U.C. Davis, Eberle befriended Australian winemaker, Brian Crozer who was “always sampling bottles of Australian Shiraz.” Little did Eberle realize that this new friendship and the discovery of Syrah (Shiraz) would soon make him a leader and pioneer of California Rhône wine.

**SYRAH** was not yet widely available in the United States during the early 1970s, with U.C. Davis having the only source in their “motherblock.” Noting that the true French Syrah cuttings produced remarkable wines in Australia, Eberle decided to introduce the world of Rhône to California winemaking. By securing the U.C. Davis budwood that was originally obtained from Chapoutier’s plantings in Tain Hermitage, Eberle introduced the clone of Syrah to California in 1975 when he planted twenty acres and in 1978 was the first winemaker in the U.S. to produce a 100% Syrah wine.

After several years of forging a path of recognition for Syrah in California, Eberle was approached by two winemakers in the area, Bob Linnquist of Qupé and Randall Gramh of Bonny Doon, who wished to purchase Syrah grapes for their own ventures. Soon many other wineries followed suit. Today, it is believed that a considerable percentage of all true Syrah grown in California can be traced back to Eberle’s original Estrella plantings, with Eberle Steinbeck Vineyard Syrah being one of few vines remaining on its original rootstock. Over the years as Syrah has become further accepted and established as a mainstream California red wine, Eberle has continued to refine its Rhône program with the addition of Viognier and Syrah Rosé.

**VIOGNIER** is Eberle’s premier white Rhône variety and the second addition to the Rhône portfolio. Today, Eberle’s Mill Road Viognier exemplifies the lush characteristics of this variety with a seductive appeal of power and elegance. Originally founded in the Northern Rhône appellations of Condrieu and Château Grillet, Viognier has recently abandoned its obscurity and can now be found in vineyards spread well over the globe. The Eberle Mill Road Viognier has been consistently selected as a top five Viognier in California, garnering numerous awards and accolades throughout the industry.

**SYRAH ROSÉ** has been the most recent and exceptionally pleasant extension to the program. This wine proves that ‘pink’ is a hot, refreshing surprise! In 2000, Eberle moved from producing a Cunoise Rosé to this fine French-style, Syrah Rosé. With a big full mouth of cherries, cranberries, apple, rose petals, spice and a long, dry finish... who could possibly resist this delightful wine?

