

NEYERS VINEYARDS

2004 Syrah 'Cuvée d'Honneur' – When I began traveling to France for Kermit Lynch in 1993, Ehren Jordan accompanied me on the first several trips. When we reached the Rhône, we would invariably hear about the Cornas of Thierry Allemand, at the cellar of every producer, and at the table of every important restaurant. Word was out that his wines were phenomenal. We began to visit Thierry in 1995, after Kermit became his US importer, and indeed the wines lived up to all of the advance billing. Thierry's most exciting wine was his 'Cuvée Sans Soufre', a wine he made only in the best vintages, using a collection of traditional but unconventional winemaking ideas handed down to him from his grandfather. Since no SO₂ was used until bottling, production was small and the risk was high. Neither of us could ever remember tasting Syrah like this before. We discussed the wine and the winemaking with Thierry repeatedly, often over a bottle of our Napa Valley Syrah, and I was always struck by how open and supportive he appeared about our wines. Later, when we began trying to make wine this way ourselves, Auguste Clape and Noel Verset were helpful as well. I think they were all flattered by our interest in these old-fashioned practices that were so unconventional to an American-trained winemaker. When we bottled our first wine resulting from this unique winemaking process, we named it 'Cuvée d'Honneur', in recognition of the extraordinary support we received from this trio of prominent vintners. Our 2004 Syrah 'Cuvée d'Honneur' is now ready for sale, and it's a remarkable wine. Dark colored, aromatic with that great aroma of spice and animal, as the French call it, the wine is an exciting example of Syrah produced in the fashion of a classic Northern Rhône. We bottled 160 cases in 750 ml bottles, and 5 cases in magnums.

