



THE RELENTLESS® STORY

Relentless is a wine that originates in a rugged, sloping vineyard planted within the chaparral foothills of the Vaca Mountains, along Napa Valley’s arid, cooler southeast corridor. For more than a decade this site has produced a consistently rich, elegant proprietary blend of Syrah and Petite Sirah.

The soul of the wine, though, comes from its namesake, Shafer’s longtime winemaker, Elias Fernandez. Before the first vintage was bottled in 1999 and before the first label was printed, the Shafer family wanted this wine to honor Elias for the key attribute they believed put him in a class all his own – his relentless pursuit of quality in winemaking.

TENACIOUS MINDSET

Elias, born the son of seasonal farm workers, went on to graduate with honors from University of California, Davis and joined the Shafer team in 1984.

“His attention to detail in the vineyards and the cellar is unmatched,” says Doug Shafer. “He inspects and tests hundreds of corks each year; he checks every new barrel coming into the winery for toast level, grain tightness, and more; every day we’re



Elias Fernandez, winemaker

bottling he comes to the winery at 5:00 a.m. and personally steam cleans every piece of equipment that will come in contact with the wine. He is truly relentless.”

And so Relentless emerged as a testament to both a person and a place.

ORIGINAL APPROACH

Doug Shafer and Elias Fernandez originally conceived of Relentless as a field blend, meaning that the vineyard site was planted to 80 percent Syrah and 20 percent Petite

Sirah. Since then the two grape varieties were picked, crushed and fermented as one. For ten vintages the Shafer team produced the wine in this style winning over consum-

ers and critics alike. The 2008 vintage was named *Wine Spectator’s* “Wine of the Year” in November, 2012.

In the first vintages, the wine was dominated by the Petite Sirah’s blueberry, smoke and char aromas and flavors. But as years went by and the vines matured, it was the Syrah that began to take the lead position with its rich, meaty aromas and flavors in combination with more floral, perfumy characteristics.

QUESTION EVERYTHING

As with each of their wines the Shafer team kept asking if Relentless had reached its finest expression. With this pursuit in mind the decision was made to move away from the structure of a field blend toward an approach similar to Hillside Select® in which only the most compelling, refined fruit of the vintage determined the make-up of the wine.

With this approach as a guide the 2010 Relentless was made as a proprietary blend of 94 percent Syrah and 6 percent Petite Sirah.

“Elias and I believe that this new take on Relentless gives everything that fans of the wine have loved while taking it to a new level,” says Doug Shafer. “It’s a style that we’re very excited about, believing that it lives up to the wine’s name and reputation.”

