



Sat 31
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Just as the Yangarra Estate Mourvedre 2008 mentioned above represents a Platonic embodiment of the mourvedre grape, the Nickel & Nickel Darien Vineyard Syrah 2007, Russian River Valley, performs a similar service for syrah. Syrah was planted in Darien in 2000 and 2001, so the vines have reached a point of development that should lend rich character to the wine and continue on a plateau of quality for 50 or 60 years. There's a whole truckload of crushed thyme, marjoram and Oolong tea in this wine, as well as baskets of blackberries and blueberries imbued with hints of prunes, plums, lanolin and leather and an all-over sense of ripe fleshiness. The color is inky with a faint violet/purple rim; the granite and shale-like mineral element feels/seems inky too. So add the caprice of lavender, licorice, bitter chocolate and potpourri crushed by mortar and pestle and scattered on a smoldering field of wild flowers and herbs. Yes, I'm saying that this is a syrah that reaches a level of delirious detail, depth and dimension, and the deeper it goes, the darker and denser it gets, until you reach the Circle of Austerity and the Chamber of Tannins and the Rotunda of Oak. (The wine aged 14 months in French barrels, 42 percent new.) Despite those fathoms, the wine is surprisingly smooth and drinkable, huge in scope yet polished and inviting.

