



BIRICHINO "SCYLLA" OLD VINE RED BLEND

2018 | \$19.99



DESCRIPTION

Alex Krause and John Locke founded Birichino in Santa Cruz in 2008. Drawing on a combined four decades making wine in California, France, Italy, and beyond, they are focused on attaining the perfect balance of perfume, poise, and puckishness. Sourcing from several carefully farmed, family-owned, own-rooted 19th and early 20th century vineyards (and a few from the late disco era) planted in more moderate, marine-influenced climates, their preoccupation is to safeguard the quality and vibrance of their raw materials. Their preference is for minimal intervention, most often favoring native fermentations, employing stainless-steel or neutral barrels, minimal racking, and fining, and avoiding filtration altogether when possible. But most critically, their aim is to make delicious wines that give pleasure, revitalize, and revive.

Birichino is not a brand-new winery, having been around for a decade now, but its popularity is gaining strength as people look toward older California vineyards for their vibrancy and concentration of fruit. The unique environment in which the vines are planted has allowed for phylloxera resistance and therefore they have been able to survive, own-rooted. Because they have such amazing material to work with, these guys aim for minimal intervention in the winery. The under-\$20 price tag for all their offerings is astonishing given the stunning quality of the wines and the historical nature of many of the sites that contribute to them.

Birichino "Scylla" California Old Vine Red Blend 2018

The 2018 Scylla is their second vintage of this Carignane-Grenache-Mourvèdre blend. It is a true testament to the power of old vines, maniacally fastidious vineyard and cellar work, Ho-

meric mythology, and the evocation of sea monsters. The irony of naming this very civilized wine for a sea monster has not faded. Carignane comes once again from the Shinns' vineyards planted in the 1920s in the Mokelumne River section of Lodi, though the family have been farming this land continuously since 1853. Grenache is sourced from the 108-year-old dry-farmed vines at Besson at the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains in the Hecker Pass Gap. Though 'tis true that the very sight of young vine, hot climate, overcropped Carignane and Grenache can be enough to require even the most grizzled mariner to change his or her undercrackers, here the deep-rooted, moderate-yielding old 'uns allow smooth sailing without stalling in the horsey latitudes. As was the case in 2017, all fermentations were with native yeasts, and the various components matured in neutral barrels before bottling in June, without fining or filtration.

Tasting Notes

NOSE:

Aromas of spice wrapped red and dark berries.

PALATE:

A smooth and juicy burst of cherry and assorted berries with a long, taut finish mingled with notes of herbs and flowers.

PAIRING: Pair excellently with dishes that have Mediterranean spices red pepper, sage, rosemary, and olives. Great recommendations include steak, barbecued red meats, roasted chicken, and braised lamb shoulder.

Fun Facts

"Deep, brilliant garnet. Vibrant, spice-accented red and dark berry aromas are complemented by a building floral nuance. Seamless and fleshy on the palate, offering juicy black raspberry, cherry and candied lavender flavors that smoothly blend depth and energy. Finishes very long and lively, with lingering florality and just a hint of delicate, polished tannins. There's superb value here. – **Vinous Magazine 91 Points**

"Quite light in the glass, this blend of 50% Carignan, 48% Grenache, and 2% Mourvèdre starts with earthy aromas of soil, gamy charcuterie and freshly crushed scents of cran-raspberry and strawberry. There is a rugged, meaty tone to the sip, which is offset by bright and snappy pomegranate flashes, leading into pepper and herbs toward the finish." =**Wine Enthusiast 93 points**

Santa Cruz & Lodi A.V.A., California

