

**Hug Cellars****2005 Syrah, Bassetti Vineyard, Rena Block  
(San Luis Obispo County)**

Bassetti Vineyard is tucked into the coastal hills west of Paso Robles, just three miles from the Pacific Ocean. Ellis Bassetti wanted to plant a Syrah vineyard, but people told him that his family ranch was too cold for wine grapes. Rhone specialist John Alban thought otherwise. With Alban's guidance, Bassetti started planting the vineyard in 1998. Yields are low and the harvest is late because of the cool climate. Bassetti produces some Syrah under his own label and also sells to a few wineries, including Hug Cellars.

The grapes for this wine come from a vineyard block that's fairly flat, with black clay soils. It's a stunning Syrah: quite dark and concentrated, with flavors of blackberry, smoked meat and white pepper. The wine, which is priced at \$45, is still very tight, with firm structure and excellent balance. I'd give it at least a few more years in the bottle. Otherwise, open it well ahead of time, decant it to give it some air, and drink it with some grilled tri-tip or other hearty meat dish.

Reviewed June 12, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Hug Cellars](#)

**Vineyard:** Bassetti Vineyard, Rena Block

**Vintage:** 2005

**Wine:** Syrah

**Appellation:** [San Luis Obispo County](#)

**Grape:** Syrah / Shiraz

**Price:** \$45.00

**THE REVIEWER****Laurie Daniel**

Laurie Daniel, wine columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, has been reviewing wine for more than 10 years. She doesn't use numbers, preferring to describe her recommended wines and let consumers decide for themselves.

Laurie believes that bigger isn't necessarily better; she's partial to wines of balance, finesse and character. Her particular interests are Pinot Noir (versions that really taste like Pinot, that is) and aromatic whites like Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer.