



WINEMAKER
Ondine Chattan

GRAPE VARIETY
100% Zinfandel

MINIMUM VINE AGE
100 Years

APPELLATION
Dry Creek Valley

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
\$45

CASES PRODUCED
485 cases (9L)

MATURATION
Aged 15 months in
French and American Oak

RELEASE DATE
Fall 2008

ALCOHOL
14.3%

pH 3.5	TA 6.7
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XYZin

XYZin wines explore the relationship of vine age to taste profile. XYZin 100 comes from Zinfandel vines that were at least 100 years of age at the time of harvest. At XYZin we believe that the history of a vineyard is as much a part of the *terroir* as are climate, soil, clones and the age of its vines. XYZin Vine Age Series wines offer a tabletop exploration of California's unique Zinfandel heritage.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

In XYZin 100, I look for concentration, complexity and depth of flavor. Older vines generally struggle to produce a small crop, and what is produced tends to make wines that are inky dark in color, with a dense core of fruit and a wonderful earthy component that is often referred to as *terroir*. These old vines have roots that dig deep into the soil in search of water and nutrients. At the same time, the vines absorb and transport some of those deep soil characters into the fruit.

Why am I so enthralled by old Zinfandel vines? Because they are part of America's history, and you can taste that history in the glass. One hundred years ago, immigrants to the U.S. from Italy, Croatia and Eastern Europe mostly planted hearty varieties that could survive cross-country travel, required minimal nurturing once planted, and lent themselves to successful home winemaking. Zinfandel's exceptional hardiness, intense color and inclination toward attaining high sugar levels made it a logical, and frequent, choice for planting in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Viticulturally, it is common for most 100-year old vines to be head-trained and spur-pruned. These are the low, gnarly old vines you see throughout California, which, unlike modern, trellised crops, are only a couple of feet off the ground. In head-trained (or goblet) vines, a free-form canopy of leaves falls across the fruiting zone, which permits some – but not too much – sunlight to touch the fruit surface. This dappled sunlight promotes a slower, more even, ripening of grapes. This system also allows for good air circulation through the canopy, which aids in the prevention of rots and molds. Finally, many old vines are mildly infected by viruses, which, in general, make photosynthesis less efficient. Thus, the vine is forced to work harder to mature the fruit. For some magical, mysterious reason, the presence of a virus, in the right balance in the vine, produces more flavorful Zinfandel fruit. These ancient vines can yield wines with a complexity and mystery that continues to tantalize and enthrall me.

THE WINE

The Dry Creek Valley is in my view the spiritual home of the Zinfandel grape thus it is fitting that our oldest vines reside there on the eastern bench overlooking the valley below. These sturdy vines produce small, deeply colored berries that yield a luscious, juicy, and pleasingly familiar array of flavors and textures that invite you to relax and enjoy. Loads of sun-ripened blackberry fruit aromas and flavors mingle with raspberry jam and more savory notes of baked crusty bread. Approachably refined tannins form a mouth-filling framework for the appealing, understated waves of chocolate and peppery spice that lingers well after the wine is swallowed. The rustic heritage of the grape calls for foods prepared from hearty, honest ingredients. This wine is best enjoyed with garden-fresh tomato bruschetta, sheep's milk cheese such as Brebiou sliced on rosemary potato bread, or dishes flavored with fire-roasted red peppers. Enjoy this wine best over the next 5 to 6 years.

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