

2006 Dashe Cellars

Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel

INTRODUCTION

It's a hard task to follow up a classic vintage such as the 2005 vintage, but the Dashe Cellars 2006 Dry Creek zinfandel definitely can stand up to its predecessor. We love this wine, with its classic velvety texture and pure, intense, elegant fruit flavors. Aromatic, complex, and rich, this is one of the best Dry Creek zinfandels we've made.

Although the 2006 vintage was a more challenging harvest—there was a heat wave in the middle of it—our technique of constantly tasting the ripening grapes allowed us to pick the fruit at just the right time to maximize the flavors. In fact, the climactic conditions resulted in a very low yield on the vines, which resulted in darker, more complex fruit from most of our vineyards. This wine is so lovely, with its perfumed aromas of violets, black raspberry, clove, and pepper that we think it might be considered one of the most fruit-forward and intense Dry Creek zinfandels that we have yet produced.

PRODUCTION

We used our special custom-made gridded tanks to ferment the wines. These tanks, outfitted with stainless-steel grids that can be raised or lowered on top of the crushed grapes, allow us to submerge the cap of grape skins beneath the surface of the fermenting wine. We extract color, body, and complexity from the grapes, using these grids, without extracting too much of the drying tannins found in the seeds. The result are intense and complex wines that feel velvety and round on the tongue rather than harsh or tannic.

About half of the wines were fermented using only the natural yeast population on the grapes, and the other half with yeasts isolated from the Rhone region of France. During fermentation the temperature was allowed to get above 90° F, to aid in the extraction of color and flavor. At dryness, the wine was gently pressed in a membrane press and pumped to small, 60-gallon barrels.

The wine was aged for 14 months in a mixture of French oak and American oak barrels. Every three months we racked the wine out of barrel to clarify the wine and aid in its development. In our blending trials, we added about 4% of petite syrah (for structure and aging potential).

PRODUCTION NOTES

Varietals:	96% Zinfandel, 4% Petite Sirah
Appellation:	Dry Creek Valley Sonoma County
Alcohol:	14.5 % by vol.
Time in oak:	14 months
Oak:	30% French & 70% American; 18% new
Production:	5496 cases, 750mL 256 cases, 375mL
Release date:	October 31, 2007
Sugg. retail price:	\$24.00 bottle, 750mL \$13.00 bottle, 375mL

Optimum time for consumption: 2007-2014

TASTING NOTES

Color:	Reddish purple.
Aroma:	Violet, bright cherry and black raspberry fruit, chocolate, vanilla, clove, and black pepper.
Taste:	Gobs of black raspberry and concentrated cherry fruit, black current, chocolate, clove spice, velvety texture on the mid-palate, complex, long sweet finish of black raspberry fruit, sweet chocolate and spice.