

2002 Dashe Cellars Todd Brothers Vineyard Zinfandel Alexander Valley

HISTORY

On an extremely steep slope of red, rocky volcanic earth, much of the Todd Brothers Ranch vineyard is made up of row after row of thick, 67-year-old zinfandel vines. From our first sight of these vines—and the bright red soil in which the vines are planted—we knew that this vineyard would create a wine unlike any other.

There's no doubt that this vineyard, located in Geyserville in the northernmost stretch of Alexander Valley—continues to make our most structured, complex, layered zinfandels. The 2002 is one of the most brooding, deep, dark zinfandels we've made from this vineyard—definitely a wine that will last for many years.

PRODUCTION

The vintage of 2002 was one of the best harvests in recent memory, with cool evenings and warm days that slowly ripened the grapes, developing great flavor and rich blackberry fruit balanced with firm acid. We harvested the grapes in mid-September, trucking the grapes to the winery in ½ ton picking bins, and then sorting the grapes on a conveyor belt on the way to the crusher. The crushed grapes were then fermented in small stainless-steel tanks using only the natural yeast population on the surface of the grapes (rather than commercial dried yeasts) to conduct the fermentation. One tank of the grapes was fermented using our custom-made stainless-steel grids that hold the grape skins below the surface of the fermenting juice, to extract maximum flavor, color, and complexity from the grapes. Another tank was fermented in the classic style, pumping juice over the cap of skins twice a day for one hour, creating a more aromatic wine. Our plan was to blend the resulting wines, capturing the aromatics of one tank and the depth of flavors of the other.

The temperature was allowed to get quite warm—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 traditional 60-gallon oak barrels.

The wine was aged for 14 months in French oak barrels, with about 18% of the wine aged in new French oak. Every three months we racked the wine out of barrel to clarify the wine and aid in its development. As the wine aged, it deepened in color and developed a complexity and firm structure that we believe will help the wine improve with up to eight years of bottle age.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Varietals: 96% Zinfandel, 4% Petite Syrah
Appellation: Alexander Valley
Sonoma County

Alcohol: 14.9% by vol.
Time in oak: 14 months
Oak: French; 18% new

Production: 320 cases, 750mL
Release date: February 1, 2005

Suggested retail price: \$28.00 bottle, 750mL
Optimum time for consumption: 2005-2014

TASTING NOTES

Color: Inky black
Aroma: Cassis, blackberry jam, chocolate, coffee, licorice, lavender and violets.
Taste: Dark blackberry fruit, cassis, licorice, chocolate, thick and velvety texture, very full-bodied with round chalky tannins, long finish of blackberry fruit and chocolate.