

2002 Dashe Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Alexander Valley

INTRODUCTION

This is a classic Cabernet Sauvignon from Alexander Valley—quite intense and complex, and at the same time possessing a mouth-coating, velvety, sensuous texture. It is certainly one of our favorite wines from an exceptional hillside vineyard—the Todd Brothers Ranch—in the Geyserville region of Alexander Valley.

Our Cabernet Sauvignon is a great example of why the winemaking philosophy of Dashe Cellars works for intense red wines. Since we combine both French and American winemaking techniques—both Michael and Anne have worked in top Bordeaux wineries such as Ch. Lafite-Rothschild and Ch. La Dominique, and Michael has worked in Cabernet producers such as Ridge Vineyards and Far Niente—we were able to extract the intensity of flavor and aroma of a California Cabernet Sauvignon but with a complexity, subtlety, and lush texture of a more European wine. It truly is an example of “the iron fist in a velvet glove,” showing wonderfully intense Cabernet flavors, along with a perfumed aroma, layers and layers of fruit and spice, and a long, complex finish.

PRODUCTION

The grapes were crushed into our smallest fermentation tank (1500 gallons) and allowed to slowly start fermentation using the native yeasts, in essence creating a “cold soak” period where the wine develops its most intense color and flavor. During fermentation the temperature was allowed to get above 90° F, to aid in the extraction of color and flavor. We let the wine stay on the fermented skins for 23 days, at which time we pressed the grapes in a gentle membrane press so as not to extract dry or harsh tannins.

We aged the wine was aged for 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, with about 30% of the wine aged in new oak. Every three months we racked the wine out of barrel to clarify the wine and aid in its development. In our blending trials, we found ourselves creating a classic “Bordeaux blend,” including Petit Verdot and Merlot in the final blend. We fined the wine with egg whites to remove harsh tannins and give the wine a silky, velvety texture. As the wine aged in the bottle, we found the wine increasing greatly in texture and complexity, and we believe that this will be quite a long-lived wine, able to age 15 years or more.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Varietals: 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot
Appellation: Alexander Valley
Sonoma County
Alcohol: 14.1 % by vol.
Time in oak: 15 months
Oak: 100% French oak; 25% new
Production: 253 cases, 750mL

Release date: April 1, 2005
Sugg. retail price: \$38.00 bottle
Optimum time for consumption: 2005-2018

TASTING NOTES

Color: Purple-black
Aroma: Cassis, plum, blackberry, chocolate, black pepper
Taste: Intense blackberry and cassis, ripe plum, chocolate, earthy, minerals, velvety texture in the midpalette, balanced and complex, firm tannins that soften in the finish, long sweet finish of blackberries that persists for minutes.