

# *2003 Dashe Cellars*

## *Louvau Vineyard Old Vines Zinfandel*

### **HISTORY**

These wonderful 68-year-old vines were discovered by John Louvau on his newly-bought property in 1989, hidden beneath a field of weeds and blackberry vines that had grown over the old grapevines. Ecstatic over his discovery, John nursed the vines back to health and now they produce some of the best grapes on the entire property. These are classic old vine zinfandel: head-trained, dry –farmed, with thick gnarled trunks popping out of the rocky old riverbed. They produce only about two tons of complex, intense grapes per acre. We love these old vines, because they make a classic Dry Creek Valley old-vine zinfandel, with the black raspberry and earthy spice that make Dry Creek zinfandels so popular and sought-after.

### **PRODUCTION**

A very warm vintage year, the harvest in 2003 was fast and intense, and produced very fruit-forward, lush wines. The Louvau Old Vine grapes were characteristically one of the first grapes to ripen and were picked in the second week of September. We trucked the grapes to the winery in ½ ton picking bins, and then sorted 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. Our tanks are outfitted with 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.

During fermentation we pump the fermenting juice twice a day over the cap of skins, to assist in the extraction of flavor components. 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 12 months in French oak barrels, with about 20% 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: 100% Zinfandel  
Appellation: Dry Creek Valley  
Sonoma County  
Alcohol: 14.9% by vol.  
Time in oak: 14 months  
Oak: French; 20% new  
Production: 230 cases, 750mL  
Release date: September 1, 2005  
Sugg. retail price: \$28.00 bottle, 750mL

Optimum time for consumption: 2006-2012

### **TASTING NOTES**

**Color:** Dark purple  
**Aroma:** Black raspberry, black cherry, plum, mineral, earth, clove, black pepper.  
**Taste:** Very complex raspberry and cherry fruit, chocolate, clove spice, velvety texture, very full-bodied with round chalky tannins, long sweet finish of black raspberry fruit and spice.