

2005 Dashe Cellars

Zinfandel Late Harvest

Dry Creek Valley

HISTORY

We love these vines at the Bella Winery estate (owned by Scott and Lynn Adams), in the northern section of Dry Creek Valley. It's a perfect vineyard for creating a sweet dessert wine, because the flavors of the grapes are so intense and we are able to let the grapes hang on the vine so long without losing acidity.

Without a doubt this is one of our most popular wines, and we've increased the quantity we made in 2005 to keep up with the demand. The vintage was perfect in 2005 to make a very balanced Late Harvest Zinfandel; it's one of our favorites.

We let these grapes hang on the vine over a month after the rest of the grapes in the vineyard were picked, to concentrate flavors and sugar. In early November, just before the rains, we finally harvested the grapes to create this black, intense essence of zinfandel.

PRODUCTION

Late Harvest Zinfandel is always an adventure to ferment. The grapes arrived at the winery at 40° Brix, and they were just what you want for Late Harvest: wrinkled, but not raisined.

We crushed the grapes to a small 1,500-gallon tank. As is our tradition, we let the fermentation proceed using the native yeasts on the grapes. The fermentation went exceptionally well, and the yeast naturally finished fermentation when the alcohol had reached about 14.1 percent and the sugar level was 9 percent.

The wine was aged in older French oak barrels, so as not to overpower the intensity of the zinfandel fruit. During our blending trials, we decided to stay with our tradition of bottling the wine as soon as possible to maintain its fresh fruit flavors and conserve its lovely sweet concentration and purity. The wine is unfinned and received minimal handling to the bottle.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Varietals: 100% Zinfandel
Appellation: Dry Creek Valley
Sonoma County
Alcohol: 14.1% by vol.
Residual Sugar: 9 %
Time in oak: 4 months
Oak: 100% French; no new oak
Production: 950 cases, 375mL
Release date: February 1, 2006
Sugg. retail: \$24.00 bottle, 375mL

TASTING NOTES

Color: Purple-tinged, deep ruby.

Aroma: Floral hints of jasmine and lavender, underscored by aromas of dried fruit (apricot, plums), cassis, chocolate, vanilla.

Flavors: Quite sweet black raspberry flavors, mixed with plum, dried apricot, and hints of cherry, chocolate, and vanilla. The explosive fruit is balanced with nice acidity, making the wine sweet but not cloying—an ideal dessert wine.