

2005 Dashe Cellars

Louvau Vineyard Old Vines Zinfandel

HISTORY

These wonderful 70-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 fist-sized rocks that make up the old riverbed. They produce less than 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, minerality, and deep aromatic dusty spice that make Dry Creek zinfandels so popular and sought-after.

PRODUCTION

The 2005 vintage was one of the best in recent memory, with a long, temperate ripening season. This worked out perfectly for the old vine zinfandel on the Louvau ranch, allowing them to develop their flavors over an extended period. This extra hang time resulted in the development of some wonderful complex flavors and very dark color.

We trucked the grapes to the winery in ½ ton picking bins and hand-sorted the grapes on a conveyor belt on the way to the crusher to eliminate any imperfect fruit. 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 14 months in French oak barrels, with about 20% of the wine aged in new French oak. Every three months we raked 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: 99% Zinfandel, 1% Petite Syrah
Appellation: Dry Creek Valley
Sonoma County
Alcohol: 14.8% by vol.
Time in oak: 14 months
Oak: French; 20% new
Production: 301 cases, 750mL
Release date: October 1, 2007
Sugg. retail price: \$32.00 bottle, 750mL

Optimum time for consumption: 2007-2015

TASTING NOTES

Color: Dark purple
Aroma: Black raspberry, cassis, black cherry, lavender, clove, black pepper.
Taste: Complex blend of black raspberry and cherry fruit, lavender, anise, clove spice, velvety texture, very full-bodied with round chalky tannins, long sweet finish of black raspberry fruit and spice.