

2006 Dashe Cellars

Zinfandel Late Harvest

Dry Creek Valley

HISTORY

We've made a Late Harvest Zinfandel from the remarkable Bella Vineyard, owned by Scott and Lynn Adams, since 2001. We love this vineyard for the complexity and intensity of the fruit, and also for the wonderful acidity of the grapes that help make this unctuously sweet dessert wine so focused and clear. It's never cloying, and always finishes with a crisp, clean, sweet note.

Without a doubt this is one of our most popular wines. Unfortunately, in 2006 the climate and vines collaborated to reduce the yield in the vineyard substantially. So, we were only able to make about half the normal quantity of this excellent wine.

As is traditional with this wine, 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.

The flavors, as always, are extremely concentrated, as if one took ten times the volume of Zinfandel and concentrated down the flavors into a single, vibrant drop of flavor. The black currant and black raspberry flavors leap out at you, followed by spicy sweet notes of licorice, caramel, and clove. The finish persists for many minutes, just inviting you to take another sip.

PRODUCTION

Late Harvest Zinfandel is always an adventure to ferment. The grapes arrived at the winery just 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: 586 cases, 375mL
Release date: July 1, 2006

SUGG. RETAIL: \$24.00 BOTTLE, 375ML TASTING NOTES

Color: Dark purple.

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

Flavors: Quite sweet black raspberry and black currant 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.