

2008 Dashe Cellars Todd Brothers Ranch Petite Sirah Alexander Valley

HISTORY

Wow—we've seldom seen such a consistently great vineyard for Petite Sirah anywhere in California, but of course the Todd Brothers Ranch, with its steep slopes, bright red soil, and rocky terrain, has always been one of our favorite vineyards for Zinfandel and is clearly an ideal terroir also for Petite Sirah. Located in Geyserville, at the northern tip of the Alexander Valley, this west-facing site seems ideal for producing balanced, yet substantial, wines that are capable of long-aging.

The Todd Brothers Petite Sirah is certainly one of the most distinctive wines we've ever made. Purple-black in color, with an earthy, chocolate-blackberry fruit flavor component and a thick, mouth-coating viscosity, the wine makes a big impression at the first sip. Although it has substantial tannins, as do most Petite Sirahs, the version from the Todd Brothers Ranch has a silkiness and smooth, velvety texture that is immediately appealing.

PRODUCTION

As is typical, we harvested the Todd Brothers Ranch Petite Sirah after the zinfandel grapes, in mid-September. The grapes were trucked to the winery in ½ ton picking bins and then sorted on a conveyor belt on their way to the crusher. At the fermenter, we pitchforked whole clusters into the tank (about 5% of the total volume) to help moderate the tannins and help produce lovely perfumed aromas of carbonic macerated grapes.

We fermented the grapes using our traditional method of native yeast fermentation, using the yeasts on the surface of the grapes to ferment the grape must. This native yeast method maximizes flavor, color, and complexity from the grapes. At dryness, the wine was gently pressed in a membrane press and pumped to traditional 60-gallon older French oak barrels.

The wine was aged for 14 months in barrels—we prefer the flavor of the fruit to not be overpowered by too much oak flavor, hence the older age of oak—so 95% of the barrels were three years old (or older). This wine is 100% from the Todd Brothers Ranch, and is 100% Petite Sirah. We feel this wine should easily improve with ten or more years of bottle age.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Varietals: 100% Petite Syrah from the Todd Brothers Ranch Vineyard
Appellation: Alexander Valley
Sonoma County
Alcohol: 14.5% by vol.
Time in oak: 14 months
Oak: French; 5% two-year old oak, 95% older oak
Production: 94 cases, 750mL
Release date: October 1st, 2010
Sugg. retail price: \$35.00 bottle, 750mL
Optimum time for consumption: 2010-2020

TASTING NOTES

Color : Purple-black
Aroma: Chocolate, roasted coffee, black current, blackberry, black pepper, earthy, mineral, and anise.
Taste: Entry shows lots of complex blackberry and black currant fruit, followed by spice, roasted herbs, chocolate, licorice, coffee, and licorice. Quite viscous mouthfeel and long, persistent finish of blackberry, chocolate, and coffee. Substantial tannins will soften with age. Intense, complex blackberry and coffee finish.