

# *2009 Dashe Cellars Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel*

## HISTORY

The Dry Creek Valley is one of the best areas on earth for creating complex, balanced, delicious zinfandels—and for many people, the Dashe Cellars Dry Creek Zinfandel is a perfect example of what can be produced from this terroir: elegant, balanced, and layered with fruit flavors and a velvety, voluptuous texture.

The vintage of 2009 was one of the best vintages from this valley in many years, and our 2009 Dry Creek Zinfandel was no exception. The weather at harvest was ideal—a long, steady heat that allowed the grapes to perfectly ripen without developing any overripe characteristics. The 2009 Dry Creek zinfandel has everything you look for in a high-end wine from Dry Creek: wonderful fruit flavors of black cherry and raspberry, mineral and earth, and clove and black pepper spice.

As always, we make this wine from a number of small, family-owned vineyards in the center and north of the Dry Creek Valley. Since Dry Creek Valley receives coastal fog and cooling influences in the evening and early morning, the grapes from this area show a bright acidity which balances the forward fruit from the vineyards, resulting in a long-lived and balanced wine.

## PRODUCTION

We used our special custom-made gridded tanks to ferment the wines. These tanks, outfitted with stainless-steel grids that can be raised or lowered on top of the crushed grapes, allow us to submerge the cap of grape skins beneath the surface of the fermenting wine. We extract color, body, and complexity from the grapes, using these grids, without extracting too much of the drying tannins found in the seeds. The result are intense and complex wines that feel velvety and round on the tongue rather than harsh or tannic.

All of the wines were fermented using only the natural yeast population on the grapes—our trademark and tradition at Dashe Cellars—and the resulting wines are intriguingly complex and luscious. During fermentation the temperature was allowed to rise to between 85 and 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 small, 60-gallon barrels.

The wine was aged for 10 months in a older French oak and American oak barrels—including our 900 gallon French oak casks that allow us to gain the softness of oak aging without adding excessive oak flavors in the wine. In the 2008 vintage, all barrels were at least one year old and as old as seven years, so as to reduce the effect of oak on the fruit. As is our tradition, we also kept the SO<sub>2</sub> levels in the wine to an absolute minimum, and did not fine the wine before bottling. In our blending trials, we added about 4% of petite sirah (for structure and aging potential) and 3% of carignane for softness and texture.

This wine is ideally paired with grilled meats, roast chicken, pasta dishes with robust sauces, lamb entrees, or simply as a delicious aperitif wine before dinner. We expect this wine to improve with age for eight or more years of bottle age.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

**Varietals:** 93% Zinfandel, 4% Petite Sirah, and 3% Carignane  
**Appellation:** Dry Creek Valley  
Sonoma County  
**Alcohol:** 14.5 % by vol.  
**Time in oak:** 10 months  
**Oak:** 80% French & 20% American; 0% new. 1800 gallons aged in large (900 gallon) French oak casks.  
**Production:** 5774 cases, 750mL  
299 cases, 375mL  
**Release date:** December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
**Sugg. retail price:** \$24.00 bottle, 750mL  
\$13.00 bottle, 375mL  
**Optimum time for consumption:** 2010-2018

## TASTING NOTES

**Color:** Black-purple, with reddish hues.  
**Aroma:** Black raspberry, black cherry, cassis, mineral, chocolate, black pepper, anise  
**Taste:** Black cherry, black raspberry, chocolate, licorice, clove spice, good acidity, wonderful viscous velvety texture on the mid-palate, complex, long sweet finish of black cherry fruit, and peppery spice.