

2009 Dashe Cellars

Louvau Vineyard Old Vines Zinfandel

Dry Creek Valley

HISTORY

Once again, these old (85-year-old, or so), gnarled, thick vines have produced a wine of great complexity and structure. The vines grow straight out of the rocky soil of the ancient riverbed on the “bench” of center east Dry Creek Valley, and they produce tiny quantities of jet-black, concentrated grapes. It’s a great pleasure to see vines such as these survive and thrive, even after they were hidden for years under a jungle of dense undergrowth, only to be uncovered by John Louvau when he cleared the land to plant a new vineyard. He nursed these old vines back to health, and now they produce a small amount of grapes that make up this bottling. We consider this vineyard one of the best old-vine vineyards in Sonoma County.

PRODUCTION

2009 was a great vintage with ideal ripening conditions, and these old “dry farmed” vines responded beautifully to the great weather. The grapes were able to ripen slowly and evenly, making a wine with just wonderful intensity and structure—this is a wine that tastes great now, but will age for a decade or more due to the supple tannins that balance the fruit. To put it simply, this is one of the most fruit-forward and yet classically structured old-vine zinfandels we’ve made from this vineyard.

At harvest the yields were low from these vines, less than 1 ton per acre—so we made only 242 cases. As always, we 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 using only the natural yeast population on the surface of the grapes (rather than commercial dried yeasts) to conduct the fermentation. At dryness, the wine was gently pressed in a membrane press and pumped to traditional 60-gallon oak barrels.

The wine was aged for 18 months in one-year or older French oak barrels, to keep the vibrancy of the fruit. 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 ten years of bottle age.

This is an ideal wine to accompany hearty grilled meats and stews, or any dish with the intensity to stand up to the tannic structure of the wine. Think of this wine as having the structure of a great, well-aged Cabernet Sauvignon, and pick a meal accordingly.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Varietals: 100% Zinfandel
Appellation: Dry Creek Valley
Sonoma County
Alcohol: 14.6% by vol.
Time in oak: 18 months
Oak: 100 % 1-year or older French oak
Production: 242 cases, 750mL
Release date: February 14, 2012
Sugg. retail price: \$32.00 bottle, 750mL
Optimum time for consumption: 2012-2020

TASTING NOTES

Color: Reddish purple
Aroma: Deeply aromatic structure of black raspberry, black cherry, and peppery spice. The initial fruit is followed with aromas of dark chocolate and mineral, and a deep earthy, almost truffle, aroma.
Taste: Lots of black raspberry and chocolate on entry. Substantial tannins which are both supple and velvety. Complex blend of red fruit, chocolate, clove spice, full-bodied, long sweet finish of black raspberry fruit and spice. Shows a beautifully long and spicy finish. A long aging wine.