

2016 Late Harvest Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley



History

This dessert wine is made from grapes grown on the Lily Hill Vineyard, owned by Bella Winery in northern Dry Creek Valley. The steep slopes and rocky soil at Bella make the vines struggle to survive, which in turn help the vines create very concentrated, complex grapes. One of the reasons that we love this vineyard is the wonderful acidity of the grapes. Even when we wait an extra four weeks to harvest the grapes, the grapes maintain their acidity. The resulting wine is focused and clear—it's never cloying, and always finishes with a crisp, clean, sweet-spicy note.

Production

We harvested the grapes earlier than normal, in mid-September, and the grapes arrived at the winery right at 40° Brix of sugar. We crushed the grapes into a small 1,500-gallon tank and as is our tradition at Dashe Cellars, we fermented the grapes naturally, using the native yeasts that naturally live on the skins of the grapes. Since the grapes were super ripe, the fermentation roared off at the start, and then rapidly slowed as the yeast created over 10% alcohol. The fermentation finally sputtered to a halt when the alcohol had reached about 14% and the sugar level was about 12%. We always allow the wine to achieve its balance of sweetness and alcohol naturally, by letting the fermentation finish up on its own. As is our tradition, the wine was aged in older French oak barrels to not overpower the intensity of the fruit. We decided to stay with our tradition of bottling the wine as soon as possible to maintain its fresh fruit flavors and conserve its 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

12.0%

Time in oak

8 months

Oak

100% French;
no new oak

Production

667 cases, 375ml

Release date

October 1, 2017

Suggested Retail

\$24 btl

Tasting Notes:

Color: Reddish purple

Aroma: Cherry, pomegranant, and floral notes of lavender and violets. Dried cranberry, black raspberry, cocoa, vanilla, and black pepper spice.

Taste: Intense, vibrant red fruit—black cherry, cranberry, pomegranant—mixed with darker flavors of currant, plum, and hints of chocolate and vanilla. Nice acidity, making the wine balanced and sweet, but not at all cloying—an ideal dessert wine.