

# *2010 Dashe Cellars McFadden Farm “Les Enfants Terribles” 100% Zinfandel; Native Yeast Fermentation*

## **HISTORY**

Let's be upfront at the beginning and say that this is a zinfandel that doesn't fit the classic image of a California wine. From start to finish, it is unusual in character: lower in alcohol, unfinned, low in SO<sub>2</sub>, fermented using native yeasts found on the grapes, organically grown. We love it—it's light in color but rich in flavor, has great balance and beautiful acidity, and goes with a very wide range of foods. With patience, it evolves into a thrilling wine.

Beneath the lovely fresh strawberry fruit, there earthiness and minerality underneath, making the wine both complex and different than your typical California wine. Although light in approach, the wine also has a velvety thickness on the midpalette that is extremely attractive.

The vineyard is in a cooler wine region—the mountains of Potter Valley, with its warm days and quite cool nights. It was the first wine in our series of wines we call “Les Enfants Terribles”—the rebel children—to highlight its unorthodox flavor profile.

## **PRODUCTION**

This is a wine that by design is totally natural from start to finish. The grapes are organically grown by our friend and talented grape-grower Guinness McFadden, and had almost no additions to the vineyard except for elemental sulfur. It was fermented using native yeasts found naturally growing on the grapes, in a stainless steel tank, and aged in older, large-format French Oak barrels.

The vintage of 2010 was a disaster, in terms of yields from zinfandel vines. An ill-timed single day of heat caused more than half the crop to wither and die on the vine. A relatively cool harvest season pushed the harvest date to November 7<sup>th</sup>—certainly one of the latest zinfandel harvests we've ever experienced. The grapes were ravaged by birds and therefore our yields resulted in production of only 170 cases of superb wine—about 1/3 of a normal production. We sorted the fruit on a conveyor belt before destemming, to ensure that only the finest grapes reached the tank for fermentation. The berries were destemmed but not crushed, so that we would get the lovely fruit of a semi-carbonic maceration. The native yeasts conducted the fermentation, and we racked the wine to 500 liter French oak puncheons for aging. After five months in barrel, we racked the wine back up to tank for bottling.

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

**Varietals:** 100% Zinfandel (even though it tastes like Gamay!)

**Appellation:** Potter Valley, Mendocino County

**Alcohol:** 13.8% by vol.

**Time in oak:** 5 months, in 500 liter French oak barrels

**Production:** 179 cases, 750mL

**Release date:** May 1, 2010

**Sugg. retail price:** \$24.00 bottle, 750mL

## **TASTING NOTES**

**Color :** Ruby red

**Aroma:** Beautiful wild strawberry nose, with black cherry underneath. Fresh earth, minerals, wonderful spicy white pepper..

**Taste:** Entry is of beautiful wild strawberry/black cherry fruit. Great acidity and velvety texture, very juicy and light on the tongue. Spicy, complex, full of mineral and earthy notes. Finish of wild strawberry, granite, and white pepper spice. Clean, lingering fresh fruit finish.