

2011 Dashe Cellars

Les Enfants Terribles Zinfandel

Heart Arrow Vineyard (Biodynamically-grown)

HISTORY

An unusual wine from one of the most pristine biodynamic farms in Mendocino County—a complete farm that produces vegetables and fruits, and raises cows, lambs, and chickens—this zinfandel is always a show-stopper. Everything on this farm is self-contained: they use no herbicides or pesticides in the vineyard at all, preferring to use cover crops and soil amendments that help sustain and protect the vines, and they entirely fertilize the crops with manure from the farm. The vineyard management techniques foster a distinctive character—the site-specific *terroir* of the vineyard—that make the wine unique in aroma, flavor, and structure from our other Zinfandels made at Dashe Cellars.

Because of the way the grapes are grown, and because of the techniques we use to make this wine—fermented with the native yeasts on the grapes; aged in older French oak barrels; unfinned; and bottled with low SO₂ levels—we felt that it deserved to be labeled with our other wines in the Les Enfants Terribles (the “Wild Children”) series, which are made in a more Old World style. The resulting purity of flavor and complex midpalette are a break from the fruit-forward style of many Californian wines—it is different in structure than most Zinfandels, with a lovely aroma and complexity on the palate.

PRODUCTION

We believe that this is our best wine yet from this young vineyard—lower in alcohol, and bursting with flavor. In 2011, the growing season was unusual, and we were worried that the vines would be affected by threatening rains. We ended up picking the grapes just before the rain arrived, so we ended up with beautifully ripe and delicate fruit. As with all of our wines, the fermentation was conducted using the native yeasts found naturally growing on the grapes, which helps with maintaining a unique and distinctive vineyard character. Even in the tank, the wine possessed a beautiful strawberry/black cherry character as well as a spiciness that we loved.

At dryness, we gently pressed the must and raked the wine to older “neutral” French oak barrels. By using older barrels we intentionally kept this wine away from heavy oak influences, and enhanced the fruit character of the wine.

The 2011 vintage produced a wine a bit softer and more velvety than our previous vintages. As is characteristic with this vineyard, the beautiful red fruit is balanced with tannins that give the wine some body and texture in the finish. Although this wine is beautiful to drink right now, it can improve with age as well, at least 8 years from the vintage date. It will go very well with a wide variety of foods—especially grilled lamb, stews, or pasta dishes.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Varietals: 100% Zinfandel
Appellation: Mendocino County
Alcohol: 13.5% by vol.
Time in oak: 5 months in older French barrels
Production: 225 cases, 750mL
Release date: September, 2012
Sugg. retail price: \$24.00 bottle, 750mL
Optimum time for consumption: 2012-2020

TASTING NOTES

Color : Reddish purple

Aroma: Complex earthiness mixed with sweet red fruit: black raspberry, strawberry, red current.

Taste: Black raspberry, red current and wild strawberry entry, plummy, earthy and mineral, good acid balance with a long, complex fruit finish and chalky tannins. Long, persistent fruit and spice finish.