

2007 Zinfandel Sonoma Valley



62% Los Chamizal Vineyard, 38% White Perry Vineyard

The Vineyards: Both the Los Chamizal and the White Perry vineyards are very near where Count Harathzy first planted Zinfandel in California at the Buena Vista Winery in 1850. He recognized this part of Sonoma Valley, up against the Mayacamas Mountains, as a perfect terroir for Zinfandel. Fred and Barbara White Perry's Vineyard is actually inside the front gate to Buena Vista Winery on about four acres. Peter Haywood's Los Chamizal Vineyard is a couple of miles west in a steep, boxed valley, almost a canyon, facing the San Francisco Bay. These two growers have as much passion for growing grapes as we do making wine. We've made wine from the Los Chamizal Vineyard for 30 years.

The Vintage: 2007 was an exceptional vintage, what we've come to think of as normal, and not seen since; no unseasonable rain, no dramatic heat spikes. The 2007 Sonoma wines show good structure and lots of fruit.

Winemaking: We handpicked into small bins so as not to crush the berries. At the winery we triple sort the the bunches, then after the destemmer knocks the berries off the bunches, they are sorted by a shaker table; and finally the individual berries on a second moving belt table. This sorting assures that the wine is cleanly made and the yeast are happy. If the yeast encounter toxins in the must they produce histamines. Histamines cause red wine headaches. This extra care also allows us to use less sulfite in the wine, none at all at the crush and only small amounts during the barrel aging. Controlled use of SO₂ assures no allergic reactions. The whole berry fermentation helps retain fruitiness and full varietal character and allows for a peaked fermentation temperature in the 90's that extracts the best color, most amount of glycerin for good mouth feel and longer more gentle tannins. The yeast are fed almost daily with organic supplements and the cap is punched down by hand twice per day. Fermentation took about two weeks. The White Perry batch was left on the skins for an additional week of extended maceration to deepen the complexity.

Élevage: We use more Pennsylvania American oak barrels than French oak to age this wine. The American oak pairs particularly well with Zinfandel. A few French barrels added aromatic and broaden the middle palate. The wines were racked only once during its four years of aging, longer than any other California Zinfandel. The barrels were topped every three weeks and tasted every other month.

The Experience: If you want to know what Zinfandel should taste like, this is it. The aromatic entry, like a potpourri of black Boysenberries and red raspberries, explodes in the middle palate with big round fruit that adds strawberries and ripe cherries to potpourri. If you forget about thinking of it as a mixture of other fruit you will experience it as Zinfandel, one of the tastiest fruits on earth, which can only minimally be described by simile. The roundness of the middle tapers slightly toward the back while remaining vibrant and full. The finish far exceeds the swallow.

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Winemakers: Robert Rex, Cecilia Valdivia

Harvested: Los Chamizal : September 18, 2007. White Perry: October 10, 2007

Brix at Harvest: Aver. 26.5°. Acid at Harvest: 5.8 to 6.5g/L as Tartaric. pH 3.50 to 3.60.

Yeast: Started on native yeast and later inoculated with L2226 yeast.

Aging: 42 months in 35% French Oak and 65% Pennsylvania American Oak, 35% new.

Fining: none. Filtration: Cross flow at bottling. Velcorin and other sterilant free.

SO₂ at Bottling: 20 ppm free, SO₂ at release less than 12 ppm

Bottled: 450 cases – April 20, 2011. Released: August 1, 2011. Alcohol: 16.5%.

Residual sugar: 0.098%.

Awards & Reviews: Gold Medal: Sonoma County Harvest Fair

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