



2019 Zinfandel

Grist Vineyard Dry Creek Valley

I have a hard time getting my French gurus to take Zinfandel seriously. They don't judge wine by the fruity aromatics, which abound in many California Zins. They want the wine to behave itself in the mouth. Because Zinfandel ripens unevenly, with green berries and raisins on the same cluster, its texture is brash and grainy.

The exception is Dry Creek Valley, which always delivers classic Bordelaise elegant tannin structure worthy of the finest Super Tuscan. The venerable Grist Vineyard is the acknowledged jewel in the DCV Zin crown, and we are vastly fortunate to have been granted access to a couple tons from our friend and colleague Woody Hambrecht.

Nobody disputes that this is the best wine we made in 2019. We picked at relatively low brix, co-fermented with Petite Sirah for its co-extraction properties (thank you Paul Draper for this trick). The wine pretty much made itself.

This result is indescribably delicious. Intense raspberries with oak toast accents lead to explosive fruit in the mouth, stylish texture and a long, mineral finish unmarred by alcohol. You just want to hug yourself.

Classy stuff. Unlike most "clown-style" impact Zins on the market today, this wine will age wonderfully for several decades, acquiring in the process some sexy aromatics like old Riesling does.

I like it with grilled sausages or rigatoni with a pancetta/gorgonzola sauce. It's also wonderful with classic Bordeaux dishes like Tornadoes Chateau Figeac (fillet mignon with artichoke hearts, truffle and bearnaise). Check out my cooking show, Gracious Living in the Time of Corona, for other recipes.

My goal is to produce skillfully crafted wines that explore winemaking possibilities beyond the contemporary mainstream.

Clark Smith, Winemaker

Vineyard Location: Grist Vineyard
Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County
First planted in 1869
90% Zinfandel
10% Petite Sirah

Harvest Date: 20 September 2019

Harvest Sugar: 24.4 Brix

Fermentation techniques:
100% crush/destem
Anchor NT112 yeast inoculum
7 gm/L untoasted Alliers chips, air seasoned 2 yrs

Elevage details:
Micro-oxygenated pre-ML at 90 mg/L/month
Malolactic fermentation in barrel
Neutral French oak aged 16 months
TA 5.9 g/L, pH 3.45 at bottling.
Alcohol 13.8%

153 cases produced.

For more details, visit www.winesmithwines.com