

2018 Late Harvest Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley



History

Dashe Cellars has made Late Harvest Zinfandels since 1997, and this luscious and balanced dessert wine has always been a favorite. This particular Late Harvest Zinfandel is made from grapes grown on the Lily Hill Vineyard, owned by our friends Scott and Lynn Adams at Bella Winery in northern Dry Creek Valley. The steep slopes and rocky soil make the vines struggle to survive, which in turn help the vines create concentrated, complex grapes. One of the reasons that we love this vineyard is the wonderful acidity of the grapes. The resulting wine is focused and clear—it's never cloying, and always finishes with a crisp, clean, sweet-spicy note.

Production

We create the conditions for making Late Harvest Zinfandel by allowing the grapes to hang on the vine approximately 3–4 weeks after they normally would be picked for a dry wine. These grapes were picked on October 30th on a beautiful Fall day, and the grapes arrived at the winery 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. We let the grapes macerate to gain color and flavor, and then allowed the tank to warm. The fermentation took off quickly, and then naturally halted when the alcohol had reached about 15.5% and the sugar level was about 9%. We always allow the wine to achieve its balance of sweetness and alcohol naturally, by letting the fermentation finish on its own. The wine was aged in older French oak barrels so as to not overpower the intensity of the fruit. We bottled 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

15.5 % by vol.

Residual Sugar

9.0% by Volume

Oak

100% French;
no new oak

Production

381 cases, 375ml

Tasting Notes:

Color: Reddish purple

Aroma: Cherry, pomegranate, 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, pomegranate—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.