

Gregory James - Winemaker Notes

2014 Carreras Ranch Zinfandel

Fruit Source: Carreras Ranch Geyserville CA

Varietal: 100% Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley AVA

Clones: Field Blend

Harvested: 9/14/14, with 24.0 Brix

Barrel Treatment: 100% neutral French Oak barrels

Bottled: 7/13 16

Barrel Aging: 21 months

Final Chemistry: 6.2 g/L TA, 3.54 pH. 14.6% Alcohol

Cases produced: 150

The Vineyard: Note this is a FIELD BLEND which means when it was planted, the block contained an assortment of " other " varieties than zinfandel. To be sure the vast majority of the block is zinfandel, but the originators frequently planted other varieties as had been done " back home " in Italy. There will almost always be some Carignane and frequently some Napa Gamay. In many cases (as here) there may be some white varieties, in the case of this block there is one or two vines of Golden Chassillas. The point is vineyard blocks such as this " Old Vine Field Blend " are increasingly hard to find as most have been replanted to more generous varieties. The resulting wine will ALWAYS have some subtle characteristics that cannot be found in a modern block of single varietal and have a beauty and balance that is remarkable in addition more interesting and rewarding aromatics and flavors.

Winemaking: as this is a true " field blend " of different varieties, the call to pick is critical as the different varietals have slightly different growth rates, hence fruit maturation is more varied than if the block were to be a single varietal (clone). Multiple picks can be utilized, although this will increase the cost substantially. Fruit is picked at first light or overnight to insure it is cool and firm for subsequent handling. The fruit is destemmed to small individual fermentation bins where all extraction is done by hand, that is hand " punching " the fruit during the fermentation. As the majority of the favorable qualities of the wine come from the skins, the maceration and extraction of these compounds comes from daily multiple " plungings, or punchings " whereas the berries are forcibly submerged in the wine to extract the color and flavors and aromatics. Fermentation takes place over a period of weeks with the juice allowed to begin fermentation with native yeasts. Yeast

ferments are monitored for vigor, when done the secondary fermentation (the malolactic fermentation) is promoted. The resulting reduction in acidity softens the wine. When finished the wine is drained from the skins and the skins/ berries are then gently pressed. The wine is pumped to tank, allowed to settle to clarify and then racked to barrels for aging. The barrels are chosen to enhance the innate characteristics of the fruit and to " dress up " the beauty of the fruit. Aging is monitored by tasting frequently and the wood exposure is adjusted to insure the fruit express its true self, not be overwhelmed with " oak characteristics ". The majority of the oak used is french oak, with a little american white oak used for framing. Finally the oak exposure is adjusted to insure the mouth feel is full and rich but not hard.

Tasting Notes: Fine vanilla and oak, slight black pepper and clove, coriander spice, raspberry, and black cherry aromatic's.

Flavors follow the aromatic profile with the initial being raspberry together with plum and bruised strawberry, clove, and pepper finish. Tactile - very soft no hard tannins and long soft finish.