



FROG'S LEAP

2022 ZINFANDEL

NAPA VALLEY

A BRIEF HISTORY

We are big believers in Zinfandel, and we think you should be, too. Delicious, exuberant fruity aromas belie a sophistication to our wine that pushes the boundaries of what it means to be serious Zinfandel, and lay the foundation for the unexpected—a Zin that can age. I have always tried to push our style in the direction of freshness, balance and elegance, which I believe yields a wine that is both more enjoyable and better reflective of the beautiful vineyards in which we grow our grapes. We farm our Zinfandel in St. Helena, just five miles north of our home in Rutherford, with the vast majority coming from just two vineyards, White Barn and Molinari, both of which sit in the gravel soils of the large alluvial fan that defines this appellation. Zinfandel thrives in this kind of soil; unfortunately for Zinfandel, Cabernet also does well in this soil, and Zin is a vanishing quantity in Napa, despite its seeming ubiquity in the rest of California. However, we continue to farm this heritage grape, in the belief that there is no better grounding for the elegant style of Zin that we love.

ABOUT THE WINE

A third straight year of drought in 2022 gave us our lowest yields ever in Zinfandel—about 30% below our historical average, a very unusual result for this heritage grape, which established its historical reputation in California as a steady hand through the vagaries of vintage variation. However, after resisting the winds of drought in 2020 and 2021, a third straight year finally made it bend the knee, and the result is one of the densest, most tannic Zinfandels we've ever made. A warm year accelerated the pace of ripening, and we finished the Zinfandel harvest before the start of September—it's more common to find us skipping our Labor Day barbecues to pick Zin. Ultimately this was to the benefit of the '22 Zin, as it entirely escaped the massive mid-September heat wave that complicated the rest of harvest.

We picked the Petite Sirah a few days ahead of the Zin and cold-soaked the entire lot. Once the Zin was picked and began to get hot with fermentation, we combined the two varieties together in a co-fermentation that has multiple advantages—first, it cools down the fermentation, allowing for a smoother, more gentle extraction of flavors; second, the specific addition of Petite Sirah adds “bones” to Zin—tannin and acid—and paradoxically makes Zinfandel wine taste more like itself. Low (5%) new oak use and extensive (60%) aging in small concrete cubes gives the wine freshness and tempo despite the tannic, weighty character of the year.

Intense red-black fruit, with a touch of warmth from the dry year. Intense floral aromas pop out on top. Rich, dense and more tannic than usual, this is a meaty Zin, and yet the olive-mineral character that I find natural to Napa Zin manages to stick out through the density, giving the wine its classic balance. I love it at very cool cellar temp (around 50°F/10°C), which really brings out its floral-savory lift. —RW



THE BLEND

85% Zinfandel, 14% Petite Sirah, 1% Carrignane

50% White Barn vineyard, St. Helena
33% Molinari vineyard, St. Helena
8% Gonzalez vineyard, St. Helena
5% Galleron vineyard, Rutherford
4% Pesch vineyards, Rutherford

THE VINES

Dry-farmed and certified 100% organic.

STATISTICS

harvested: August 22 – August 25, 2023
harvest chemistry: 24.8° brix, 6.1 g/L TA, 3.64 pH
final chemistry: 14.5% alc., 5.5 g/L TA,
3.82 pH, 0.04% RS
bottled: December 1, 2023
6,599 cases produced

WINEMAKERS

John Williams
Rory Williams
Pablo Polanco

VINEYARDIST

Frank Leeds

BALANCE, RESTRAINT AND DEEP RESPECT FOR THE NATURAL EXPRESSION OF THE VINE