

2004 Old Vine Zinfandel

Source: Soucie Vineyard

Appellation: Lodi

Age of Vineyard: 88 years

Harvest Dates: August 30 & September 10, 2004

Brix at Harvest: Average of 29

Fermentation Method: Small, Open-top Containers,
Manual Punchdown, Vertical Basket Press

Length of Fermentation: Average of 16 Days

Yeasts: D254, D80, BM45

Time in Barrel: 19 Months

Type of Oak: 100% American – 40% New, 60% Used

Bottling Date: April 21, 2006

Cases Produced: 229

This Zinfandel is no shrinking violet, it's big, really big – packed full of fruit, body and bouquet. Complex layers of jammy flavors reminiscent of blackberries, raspberries, cassis and strawberry are balanced with smoke, spice and toast. An "old vine" character and distinctive notes of the terroir of the vineyard add a special *something*. Intense color and velvety tannins make this a mouth-filling wine to be enjoyed right now with friends and food.

The grapes for this Zin come from Soucie Vineyard, grown from the block of vines planted in 1916 – old by any criteria. Third-generation grape grower Kevin Soucie is a meticulous farmer and his vineyard is a work of art. The vines in the 1916 Block were planted by Kevin's grandfather prior to his Army service in France during World War One.

The vines are grafted to St. George rootstock and are head-trained; grown without the support of a trellis. The sandy earth is more than 60 feet deep and because of the nature of the soil the vines are naturally resistant to phylloxera.

The upper reaches of the Sacramento River Delta and the San Francisco Bay are just 12 miles from the vineyard; ocean breezes in the evenings moderate the high temperatures that other less-favored areas of the valley endure. It is not unusual for daily temperatures to vary as much as 40 degrees.



During the summer of 2004 the Zin vines were shoot-thinned, secondary clusters were removed and excess fruit was dropped on the ground to balance the vine and the crop load. The canopy was thinned to provide the perfect balance of sun and shade required to optimize flavor development in the grape. The vineyard is deficit-irrigated but a state-of-the-art underground drip irrigation system provides water to the vines if needed.

Zinfandel in general, and the 1916 Block of Soucie Vineyard specifically, doesn't ripen evenly. To overcome this problem we make two harvesting passes through the vineyard, days or even weeks apart, hand-selecting the best clusters for harvest and culling out less than perfect fruit. This requires more time and costs more, but the result is a wine full of flavor and character.

After harvest the grapes were destemmed and gently crushed. Fermentation was long and slow to maximize flavor and color; we gently punched down the cap of skins and seeds to avoid extraction of harsh tannins. After pressing the wine was aged 19 months in new and used American oak barrels.

We hope you enjoy this wine as much as we do!