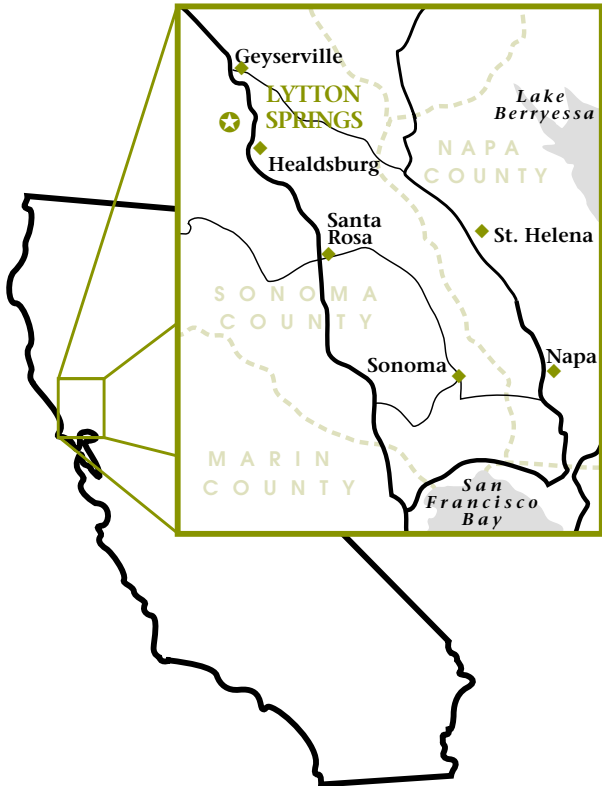


35% Estate Vineyard
40% Norton Ranch
25% Maple Vineyard

91 Lytton Springs Vineyards, bottled March 93

This wine is made from three vineyards along Lytton Springs Road. They are virtually contiguous, with the same climate and similar soils, so are treated as a single vineyard. In 1991, spring rains delayed the growing season, but an unusually warm September and October ensured full ripeness and concentration at harvest. Old-vine grenache and carignan add finesse; petite sirah adds depth and structure. This superb wine shows the intense fruit of young zinfandel, yet will develop further with five to ten years of bottle age. PD (2/93)



Location: Eastern edge of Dry Creek appellation, Sonoma County
Acreage: Estate Vineyard: 101-year-old zinfandel, petite sirah, grenache, carignan, 45 acres
Maple Vineyard: 81-year-old mixed zinfandel, carignan, petite sirah, 6 acres;
34-year-old zinfandel, 12 acres
Norton Ranch: 38-year-old zinfandel, grenache, carignan, 13 acres
Yield: 1.5 - 3.0 tons / acre
Soils: Varied within each vineyard with a predominance of gravelly clay; gravelly clay loam on hillsides
Climate: Fog in a.m., warm sunny afternoons, breezes in late p.m.
Elevation: 80' - 160'
Exposure: Southeasterly
Owner: Estate Vineyard - Ridge Vineyards
Maple Vineyards - Tom and Tina Maple
Norton Ranch - Bill Hambrecht

RIDGE 1991

CALIFORNIA

ZINFANDEL

LYTTON SPRINGS

GRAPE VARIETALS: 80% ZINFANDEL IN A VINEYARD BLEND WITH 12% PETITE SIRAH, 5% GRENACHE AND 3% CARIGNAN
DRY CREEK, SONOMA COUNTY ALCOHOL 14.1% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA 95015

1991 marks not only Ridge's 30th anniversary, but also the first vintage in which the grapes from all three of our vineyards on Lytton Springs Road were fermented at Ridge. The properties are virtually contiguous, sharing the same climatic conditions and variations in soil. For the past two years each wine has been made separately, but the similarities are such that we treat them as a single vineyard. They are located on the narrow strip of bench and gentle hills which divide Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys, just north of Healdsburg in Sonoma County. On the east is our Lytton Springs estate vineyard with its 19th century vines; within a stone's throw to the west, the forty-year-old zinfandel and young petite sirah of the Norton Ranch; down the slope three hundred yards to the west, the 19th century mixed vines, thirty-five-year-old zinfandel and young petite sirah of the Maple vineyard.

Very welcome but unusually late spring rains in 1991 moved the growing season back two weeks. At Lytton Springs, as elsewhere, the vines set a good crop, requiring only normal thinning. (About twenty percent of the clusters were eliminated.) The summer was relatively cool, but temperatures warmed in September and—most unusual—continued warm through October. Any fears of a less-than-ripe vintage were dispelled, and the grapes were harvested at optimum sugar levels.

After a full, natural malolactic fermentation, we assembled the various vineyard sections and varieties through a series of blind tastings. One third of the wine went to barrel in new, air-dried american oak, and the rest in similar barrels, two to three years old. After approximately fourteen months and five racks, the wine was brought up for bottling. With its luscious red fruit and perfect balance, this lovely wine may set a standard for future vintages of Lytton Springs. With more depth of fruit than the '90, it is equally full-bodied, yet lively. Accessible now, it poses the classic dilemma: drink it young and savor the intense fruit, or wait five to ten years, by which time the fruit will have undergone a transformation, and the wine will be more complex and developed.

TASTING NOTES

COLOR: Deep ruby.

NOSE: Well-defined, forward, intense. Blueberry, plum. Mint/spice/sweet oak.

PALATE: Rich berry/brambly flavors in harmony with clean, fresh oak. Very approachable. Classic Dry Creek zinfandel.