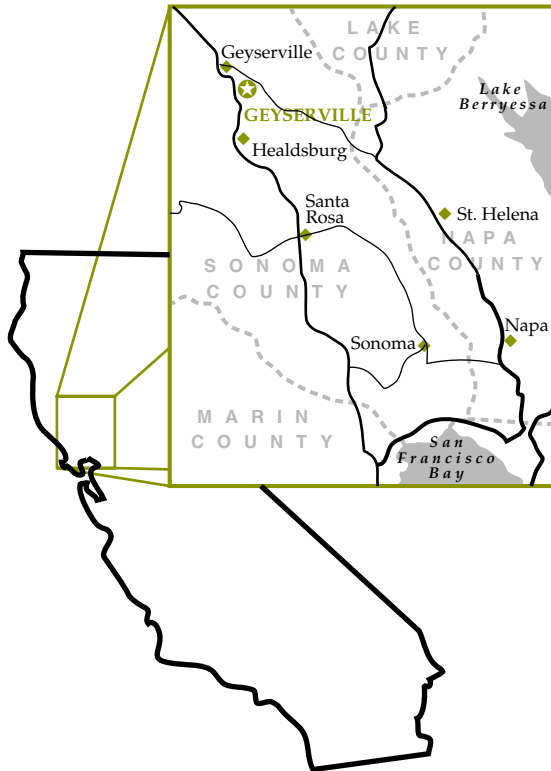


RIDGE 1994 CALIFORNIA GEYSERVILLE®

94 Geyserville Vineyard, bottled February 96

The '94 growing season began with another late spring, resulting in a somewhat reduced crop. The old vines received only minor thinning, but in the younger zinfandel twenty to thirty percent of the clusters were dropped at veraison, adjusting the amount each vine carries to its relative strength. Leaf stripping and selective cane removal exposed the fruit to the sun, ensuring full ripeness and depth of flavor. Typically, the Geyserville needs a year in bottle to be approachable, but 1994's near-perfect integration of fruit and tannin make it delightful now. This fine wine will be at its best over the next five to ten years. PD (12/95)

60% ZINFANDEL IN A VINEYARD BLEND OF 22% CARIGNAN, 12% PETITE SIRAH, 4% ALICANTE, AND 2% MATARO
SONOMA COUNTY ALCOHOL 14.5% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO ROAD, BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CA 95015



In 1990, after producing twenty-five vintages of this great single-vineyard wine, we were able to lease the old Whitten Ranch portion of the Trentadue family's vineyard at Geyserville. All the zinfandel—with the exception of three small blocks—is planted on the thirty-six leased acres, guaranteeing that we will have these exceptional grapes for at least several decades to come.

With 1994's late spring, the old-vine zinfandel grapes were the only ones to ripen before the middle of September. The young vines on Whitten Ranch, which is divided equally among our three favorite 19th-century clones, were heavily thinned for intensity. They matured fully by the third week. The twenty-eight-year-old zinfandel and the petite sirah were ready by month's end. True to form, much of the hundred-fourteen-year-old carignan was not ready to pick until the second week of October.

The majority of grapes were fermented in small tanks. About forty percent (including half the zinfandel) was fermented with the grapes submerged in the liquid. The rest of the grapes were allowed to float, and their juice was pumped over the skins extensively for maximum extraction of color and tannin.

Fifteen percent of the wine was aged in new, air-dried american oak, another forty percent in one-year-old oak, and the rest in five-year-old oak. After a year in barrel, the wine is beautifully integrated. Blackberry fruit is dominant, the mid-palate quite sensuous; tannins in the finish are chalky but round. Though this wine has a history of needing a year of bottle age to come around, the '94 seems more developed and, despite its youth, exquisitely balanced. For the first four or five years it will be dominated by the fresh fruit of youth; additional complexity—at the expense of fruit—will develop with ten years of bottle age.

Location: Sonoma County, 3 miles south of the town of Geyserville on the western edge of Alexander Valley.

Acreage: 114-year-old zinfandel, 15 acres
29-year-old zinfandel, 12 acres
114-year-old mixed blocks, 5 acres
14-year-old petite sirah, 5 acres
114-year-old carignan, 7 acres.

Yield: 1-3 tons / acre

Soils: Gravelly loam

Climate: Occasional morning fog, warm days with frequent evening breezes.

Elevation: 200'

Exposure: Southern

Owner: Leo and Evelyn Trentadue

TASTING NOTES

COLOR: Deep, dark ruby.

NOSE: Sweet, ripe raspberry; caramel/butterscotch, vanilla, oak; some black currant. An underlying meaty, earthy richness. Hints of smoke, sage, rosemary.

PALATE: Lovely blackberry/raspberry/currant flavors complemented by buttery vanilla and a subtle earthiness. Excellent acid balance; well-rounded tannins.