

RIDGE 1994

CALIFORNIA

LYTTON SPRINGS®

94 Lytton Springs Vineyards, bottled Feb 96

In this fine vintage, the hills at Lytton East were first to ripen, followed shortly by Maple Vineyard and, as October waned, Lytton West. (In August of this year, Ridge purchased the Norton Ranch portion of Lytton Springs, which has been part of our Lytton Springs bottling since 1984. We have re-named the property "Lytton West", corresponding to the original Lytton East, a quarter of a mile away.) To accentuate the rich, complex fruit, we limited the amount of new oak. After twelve months in barrel, the wine is remarkable for its structure, depth, and liveliness. Enjoyable now it will be at its best over the next five to ten years. PD (12/95)



Location: Eastern edge of Dry Creek appellation, Sonoma County.

Acreage: Lytton East: 104-year-old petite sirah, zinfandel, grenache, 45 acres.
Maple Vineyard: 84-year-old mixed zinfandel, petite sirah, 6 acres;
35-year-old zinfandel, 12 acres.
Lytton West: 41-year-old zinfandel, grenache, 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: Lytton East & West - Ridge Vineyards
Maple Vineyard - Tom and Tina Maple

80% ZINFANDEL IN A VINEYARD BLEND WITH 13% PETITE SIRAH, 4% CARIGNAN, 2% GRENACHE, AND 1% ALICANTE
DRY CREEK, SONOMA COUNTY ALCOHOL 14.3% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, INC. BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD., BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA 95015

This is the sixteenth vintage Ridge has made from these old zinfandel and mixed-varietal vines along Lytton Springs Road. The first was in 1972, from vines we now own and call Lytton East. With that vintage, we originated the designation Lytton Springs, which has since become a Ridge trademark. With the release of the '93, we removed the word "zinfandel" from the front label, feeling that the wine's style and character are sufficiently distinctive to warrant using only the vineyard name—Lytton Springs.

The last several growing seasons have started late; '94 was no exception. Crop levels were moderately lower than average, and we dropped clusters only on the weaker vines. We harvested as each of the three vineyards became fully ripe—the hills at Lytton East in mid-September, Maple vineyard in early October, and Lytton West in mid- to late October. (In August of 1995, Ridge purchased the Norton Ranch portion of Lytton Springs, which has been a component of our Lytton Springs bottlings since 1984. We have re-named the property "Lytton West", corresponding to the original Lytton East, a quarter of a mile away.)

The old-vine zinfandel was fermented in small tanks, and the grapes held below the surface of the juice for slower, gentler extraction. The petite sirah and carignan were also in small fermentors, but with grapes floating and the juice pumped over.

Naturally-occurring yeasts and malolactic bacteria, respectively, carried out the primary, and, within two weeks, the secondary fermentation. To accentuate the vineyard's distinctive fruit, we limited the number of new barrels, aging most of the wine in three- and four-year-old air-dried american oak. After a total of six racks and more than a year in small cooperage, we blind-tasted one last time and bottled without fining.

This rich, beautifully balanced wine combines the cherry fruit typical of the vineyard with the characteristic blackberry of old-vine zinfandel. Enjoyable now, it will be at its best over the next ten years, with fresh, lively fruit dominant for the first four or five.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Ripstein".

TASTING NOTES

COLOR: Deep ruby

NOSE: An exotic melange of ripe wild blackberry, crushed leaf and briar. Hints of peppermint, rose hips, vanilla.

PALATE: The leaf/briar component makes this a classic Dry Creek zinfandel. Exquisite balance, firm acid, lingering finish. Tannins are unobtrusive, but sufficient to warrant further cellaring.