

# RIDGE 1995

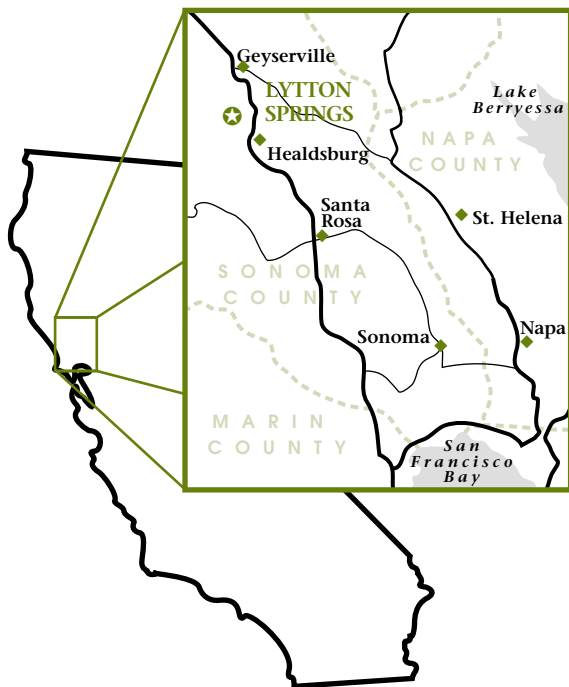
## CALIFORNIA

# LYTTON SPRINGS®

### 95 Lytton Springs Vineyard, bottled Feb 97

In 1972 we originated this designation for wine made from the Valley Vista vineyard (purchased in 1991 and renamed "Lytton East"). In 1984 we made use of the vines a quarter-mile to the west on the Norton Ranch (purchased in 1995 and renamed "Lytton West"). In 1991 we first included grapes from the Maple vineyard—also just to the west. This year, with yields down, the grapes ripened fully, producing this rich, spicy wine. Aged in air-dried american barrels, with new oak limited to twenty percent, the dark, berry fruit shows to advantage—and will be most appealing when the wine is young. For those who prefer mature wines, the firm structure and fine balance will assure development over the next ten to twelve years.

PD (1/97)



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

**Acreage:** Lytton East: 105-year-old petite sirah, zinfandel, grenache, 45 acres.  
Maple Vineyard: 85-year-old mixed zinfandel, petite sirah, 6 acres;  
36-year-old zinfandel, 12 acres.  
Lytton West: 42-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 & Tina Maple

**84% ZINFANDEL, 14% PETITE SIRAH, 2% CARIGNAN**

**DRY CREEK, SONOMA COUNTY**

ALCOHOL 14.3 % BY VOLUME

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, INC. BW 4488

17100 MONTE BELLO ROAD, BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA 95015

For seventeen vintages Ridge has made wines from the old zinfandel and mixed-varietal vines along Lytton Springs Road. Our first Lytton Springs Zinfandel, 1972, marked the origination of the Lytton Springs designation. In 1993, we deleted the word "zinfandel" from the front label, on the grounds that the wine's style and character are sufficiently distinctive to the vineyard to warrant using only the name Lytton Springs.

Cool spring weather delayed bud-break until the latter half of March at Lytton East, Lytton West, and the Maple vineyard. The cool weather continued through most of the spring, culminating in unseasonably strong thundershowers in early June—just when the vines began to flower. Rain knocked flowers from the clusters, in essence performing the same crop reduction typically performed—by us—later in the season. Nature gave us crop levels close to what we would have sought, with only slight reduction in quantity as compared with previous harvests.

A long, moderate summer ripened the fruit slowly, and a final burst of heat in mid-September pushed the fruit in all three vineyards to full ripeness. Lytton East was first to be harvested, Lytton West, in late September, was second, the Maple vineyard, in early October, last. The long ripening period—almost two weeks more than usual at Lytton Springs—provided ideal balance between acidity and the complex fruit flavors.

As always, the primary and secondary fermentations were carried out by naturally-occurring yeasts and malolactic bacteria. The old-vine zinfandel was fermented in small tanks, the grapes held beneath the surface of the juice for slow, gentle extraction—a process known as submerged-cap fermentation. The petite sirah and carignan were also fermented in small tanks, but the juice was pumped over a floating cap of grapes.

Malolactic fermentation finished soon after the end of primary; the fifteen separate parcels were blind-tasted over a period of three weeks. The finest—and most typical of the vineyard's character—were assembled to make this wine, which was then transferred to air-dried american oak for aging. To complement the wine's full, luscious fruit, only twenty percent went to new barrels; while the rest was aged primarily in one- and two year-old wood, adding spice and structure to the wine. After five racks and more than a year in barrel, it was bottled without fining.

This intense, complex wine combines the raspberry typical of the site with the deep, darker blackberry often found in old-vine zinfandel. Petite sirah adds a spicy chocolate note that complements the bright zinfandel. The opulent, forward fruit will be at its most appealing in the first four or five years. For those willing to set a bottle or two aside, the wine's substantial structure and fine balance assure a different pleasure after ten, or even twelve, years of aging.