

RIDGE 1997

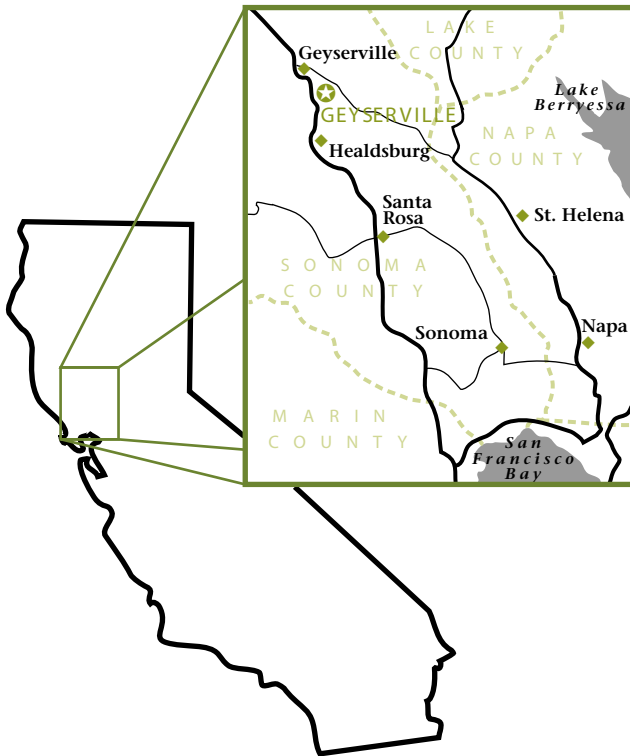
CALIFORNIA

GEYSERVILLE®

97 Geyserville Vineyard, bottled January 99

Growers will remember this year fondly for its exceptionally abundant yields, following two very small vintages. Another characteristic of the 1997 harvest is that all the grapes seemed to ripen at the same moment. Because of the time required for picking, this resulted in very rich, full wines. We had dropped half the crop on the younger vines, and fifteen percent on the older vines, to ensure the intensity we seek. Structure is particularly solid; firm acidity adds elegance and definition to the ripe fruit. This Geyserville is a fine example from a great decade. It will be at its best over the next five to six years. PD (11/98)

GEYSERVILLE VINEYARD: 74% ZINFANDEL, 15% CARIGNANE, 10% PETITE SIRAH, 1% MATARO SONOMA COUNTY ALCOHOL 14.9% BY VOLUME
 PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS BW 4488
 17100 MONTE BELLO ROAD, BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CA 95015



For over thirty years Ridge has made a zinfandel wine from the Trentadue family vineyard at Geyserville. Except for three small blocks, all the zinfandel comes from the Whitten Ranch portion of the property. In 1990, we signed a long-term lease for this part of the vineyard, placing all farming and viticultural decisions in our hands, and assuring us access to these grapes for several decades to come.

Heavy rains fell off and on through January, stopped abruptly in mid-February, and disappeared entirely until late August. The buds emerged early—by the first week of March. Bud break is a time of concern for any grapegrower. A sudden spring storm can seriously reduce the year's crop by knocking the tiny flowers off the vine. This was not the case in 1997. Warm spring weather and moist subsoils provided just the right conditions for the vines to set a large crop. To ensure good concentration of flavor, we dropped a total of fifty percent of the grapes on the younger (nine to thirty-nine year old) vines and fifteen percent on the older (one hundred to one hundred thirty-eight years old). A very few were dropped just after set, but most at veraison in late summer, when the grapes turned color. Summer temperatures were warm but below average, rarely reaching 100° F. This—along with the rigorous thinning—allowed even ripening, excellent flavor development, and ideal acidity. Picking began on September 1. Typical of the sudden and quick-paced 1997 harvest, it was finished in barely over two weeks.

Most of the grapes were fermented in small tanks with capacities from three to seven tons. To structure the ripe lushness of the vintage, we fermented eighty percent (twice the usual amount) submerged below the surface of their juice. The rest floated in the liquid, kept thoroughly mixed by daily pump-overs. Both primary and secondary fermentations took place naturally, without inoculation. After malolactic, the twelve blocks that make up this wine were assembled and racked to air-dried american oak barrels, of which twenty-seven percent were new.

The 1997 Geyserville is particularly well integrated, already exhibiting an open, complex aroma of toast, vanilla, pepper, and black cherry. The elegant, forward character of the nose, however, belies what follows: a solidly-structured, mouth-filling wine. Enjoyable in its youth, it will develop beautifully over the next six years.

- Location:** Sonoma County, 3 miles south of the town of Geyserville on the western edge of Alexander Valley.
- Acreage:** 107-year-old zinfandel, 15 acres.
36-year-old zinfandel, 12 acres.
117-year-old mixed blacks, 5 acres.
17-year-old petite sirah, 5 acres.
107-year-old carignane, 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

(408) 867-3233

www.ridgevine.com