

# RIDGE 1999

## CALIFORNIA

### LYTTON SPRINGS®

#### 99 Lytton Springs, bottled January 2001

This year's late spring moved the growing season back by two weeks on the Ridge estate vineyards at Lytton Springs. Over time, we have noted increased size and structure in the Lytton Springs; the '99 best exemplifies this phenomenon to date. Combined with slightly more petite sirah than usual, and a fair amount of rich, sensuous carignane, this is a great vintage from an exceptional vineyard. The wine's weight allowed us to use more new and one-year-old american oak for aging—without detracting from the intense, layered fruit. Remembering the structure of the '74, which is beautiful still, we realize that this wine may be equally long-lived. Like all well-balanced zinfandels, however, it will also be appealing as a young wine. PD (12/99)

**70% ZINFANDEL IN A VINEYARD BLEND WITH 17% PETITE SIRAH, 10% CARIGNANE, AND 3% MATARO DRY CREEK VALLEY SONOMA COUNTY**

ALCOHOL 14.5% BY VOLUME  
 PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, INC. BW 4488  
 17100 MONTE BELLO ROAD, BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA 95015

This year we come of age—celebrating our twenty-first vintage from this historic vineyard. Located on the benchland and rolling hills separating Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys, it is just north of Healdsburg, in Sonoma County. Today, Lytton East and West—purchased by Ridge in the early nineties—are separated by several small residential parcels. In the 1870s, under "Captain" William Litton's ownership, they were all part of one property; the spelling evolved into "Lytton" by 1903. The vineyard is planted primarily to zinfandel and some of its principal complementary varietals: here, they include petite sirah, carignane, a small amount of mataro (mourvèdre), and century-old grenache. After years of including "zinfandel" in a prominent position on the front label, we ceased to use it in 1993, placing the greater focus on the site's distinctive character.

For the second year in a row the growing season had a record late start, moving harvest back by an entire month. Unlike last year, there were no August rains to trouble us; the weather continued fair and clear through mid-November. We harvested from late September through the first week of November (another record) as each block ripened fully.

All the zinfandel was fermented with the grape skins held below the surface of the liquid by a grid (submerged cap). The complementary varietals fermented with the more typical floating cap of skins. Thorough juice circulation in all tanks provided this vintage with firmer tannin structure than any since 1974.

After natural (uninoculated) primary and secondary fermentations, the wine was assembled from a selection of the eighteen separate blocks, then racked to air-dried american oak for fifteen months of aging. The full, ripe character of the vintage allowed us to increase the number of new, one-, and two-year-old barrels without overwhelming the intense fruit.

Though 1999's modest set and serious thinning resulted in less wine than average, quality is excellent. This fine Lytton Springs will show most fruit over the next five to seven years, but has the potential to age beautifully beyond that.



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

**Acreage:** *Lytton East:* 109-year-old zinfandel, petite sirah, grenache, carignane, 42 acres.  
*Lytton West:* 46-year-old zinfandel, grenache, carignane, 33 acres; 4 to 11-year-old zinfandel, petite sirah, grenache, mataro, 27 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:** Ridge Vineyards

408.867.3233

[www.ridgevine.com](http://www.ridgevine.com)