

30% Selection

2000 Lytton Springs, bottled Dec 2001

This year, set (fruit formation) was down significantly, but these low yields allowed the grapes to ripen fully by mid-September; we were able to harvest all of Lytton Springs in just two weeks. The eighteen separate parcels—divided among thirty-four small fermentors—fermented on their natural yeast. We chose seventy percent of the most intense and flavorful lots for this wine. For the first time in a decade, all were either zinfandel or petite sirah. (The carignane, mataro, and softer zinfandels will be part of our Sonoma Zinfandel.) A third of the air-dried american oak barrels used in aging were either new or one year old, so to accentuate the fruit, and avoid over-oaking, we bottled after twelve months. This very rich, yet well-structured wine is appealing now; its lovely fruit will show to best advantage over the next five to seven years. PD (10/01)



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

Acreage: *Lytton East:* 110-year-old zinfandel, petite sirah, grenache, carignane, 42 acres.

Lytton West: 47-year-old zinfandel, grenache, carignane, 33 acres; 5 to 12-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

RIDGE 2000

CALIFORNIA

LYTTON SPRINGS®

ESTATE GROWN: 80% ZINFANDEL, 20% PETITE SIRAH
DRY CREEK VALLEY ALCOHOL 14.8% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, INC. BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, BOX 1810, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA 95015

We made our first wine from this historic vineyard in 1972. Located on the benchland and rolling hills between 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 Lytton's ownership, they were part of one property; the spelling evolved into "Lytton" by 1903. The vineyard is planted primarily to zinfandel and its principal complementary varieties: 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, instead placing focus on the distinctive character of the site itself.

The timing of flowering was typical this year, but set was significantly smaller than usual. Summer temperatures fluctuated rather wildly. With less fruit to ripen, however, harvest began in mid-September and was over in only two weeks. We fully crushed most of the zinfandel. The petite sirah, and the very intense, small-berry zinfandel from the eastern hills was de-stemmed, a majority left as whole berries. Tannins were considerable in this latter group: leaving the berries whole, and using the floating cap method of fermentation (rather than submerged cap, which we used with the fully-crushed fruit) enabled us to better guide tannin extraction. It also meant we could extend maceration (time on the skins and seeds) to an average of twelve days—more typical of Ridge winemaking in the seventies and eighties than the nineties. Both primary and secondary (malolactic) fermentations were uninoculated, depending instead on the natural process and the yeasts present in the vineyard. We divided fruit from the eighteen individual vineyard parcels among thirty-four fermentors, and chose seventy percent of these wines for the 2000 Lytton Springs. (The remaining thirty percent, softer and less structured) were included in our Sonoma Zinfandel.) This year we did not use the carignane and mataro. The dominance of zinfandel and petite sirah is, again, more characteristic of wines from the seventies and eighties.

Twenty percent of the wine aged in new, air-dried american oak, and another ten percent in still-strongly-flavored one-year-old oak. Based on regular evaluative tastings, we elected to bottle after just twelve months. This a rich, complex, sensuous wine. Approachable now, it will continue to develop over time.

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

408.867.3233

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