

### 2019 Harvest at Lytton Springs



Frequent and steady winter storms delivered over 60 inches of rain to Dry Creek Valley, double our average. Once spring arrived, the vines, benefitting from the plentiful water in the soil, responded with explosive shoot growth. Early and extra passes by the vineyard crew to sucker and remove excess vegetation was necessary to open up the canopy and minimize the threat of mildew. The weather continued to cooperate into late spring during flowering and fruit set. By mid-June it was clear that clusters were larger than usual and that an above-average crop was in-store.

A series of summer heat waves expedited the growing season but was not enough to cause excess stress in the vines. Unique to 2019, zinfandel, which typically ripens first, was behind its main co-planted varieties, petite sirah and carignane. This posed a challenge in

the many field blend vineyards where these grapes are inter-planted and harvested together. Patience was needed to hold off picking and wait for the zinfandel to catch up.

Harvest started on Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> with the carignane from the Buchignani ranch. The dense, blueberry-sized grapes, resembled cabernet more than carignane. This was followed by petite sirah from Lytton West with equal intensity. The crop load of zinfandel, higher than expected, delayed ripening. Most zinfandel blocks were picked in the latter half of September. As these grapes arrived in quick succession, available tank space to ferment them became a challenge. Fortunately, natural fermentations were quick to start, reducing average fermentation times to just eight days.

To increase extraction of color and tannin in some zinfandel blocks at Lytton West, we co-fermented these parcels with adjoining petite sirah blocks picked at the same time. This proved successful. As malolactics finish and initial assemblage of the Lytton Springs gets underway, many of these wines have been included in the 2019 Lytton Springs.

One of the rare harvests to stretch well into fall, we picked the last grapes on Oct 19. At this early stage, the vintage emphasizes elegant fruit over tannin and structure. As the wines evolve in barrel and blending options come into clearer view, there is much to look forward to from 2019.

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