

Chateau Montelena 2005 Montelena Estate Zinfandel

Winemaker's Notes

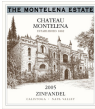
We describe the 2005 vintage as a mild one, with good ripening weather throughout, and this is especially beneficial to the thin skinned Zinfandel grape. In heat it can experience shrivel, and with cold and wet conditions it can rot more easily. So we were confident that the relatively cool 2005 vintage would be particularly kind to this variety. We also knew that if grown with patience from low yielding, carefully farmed Calistoga vines - with an eye toward crafting an elegant, claret-styled red wine - our Estate Zinfandel grapes would provide delicious rewards in the glass.

Vintage Weather

While the 2005 growing season evolved at a leisurely pace, harvest was a sprint to the finish, with a rally of all red grapes coming in simultaneously. A solid and steady picking schedule of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Zinfandel, resulted in a daily crush of 13 to 40 tons per day for a full 18 days. Zinfandel came in during the first two weeks of October, relatively typical for this variety. But waiting into October for flavors to develop, even with ideal weather, can make raising a real risk. We managed to work around this by walking the vineyard in the afternoon, examining each row, and deciding which grapes to pick that night, when the fruit would be cold.

Tasting Notes

The wine shows a very good deep red color. It has many of the typical Zinfandel notes on the nose: spicy berry, subtle briar, and some dried fruit component. On the palate it opens with a nice big bowl of the same briar and berry flavors, and a spicy Zinfandel character. The overall body does reflect a cooler vintage, and the very slightly higher acidity gives freshness to the bright fruit and elegant texture. It is very much a claret style, food friendly wine, so unlike many huge high alcohol Zins thundering around nowadays, this will accompany an astonishing array of cuisine. On release it will clearly taste like a young wine, but over time its classic lines, nice berry fruit, and medium weight will make this a tasty dinner wine, and an easy sipper.



Production and Technical Data

Harvest Dates:	1972 plantings: 10/1, 1994 plantings: 10/6-10/14
Bottling Date:	May 2007
Release Date:	March 2008
Production:	4,800cases
Time in Oak:	18 months
Sugar at Harvest:	1972 plantings: 26.4° brix, 1994 plantings 24.1°-25.5° brix
Alcohol:	14.7%