

Chateau Montelena 2002 Montelena Estate Zinfandel

Winemaker's Notes

The 2002 vintage kept us on our toes as weather conditions shifted from one end of the scale to the other, seemingly with little regard for the season. Heavy rains in winter were offset by a dry spring, and then the effects of the cool growing season were tempered by an unanticipated heat wave at Harvest. This unusual sequence of factors created a distinctive wine, an excellent example of the complexity and balance that can be achieved with this wonderful grape.

Winter of '01/'02 got off to a wet start with over 24" of moisture in November and December. The rain quickly trailed off and we had rather dry soils going into the spring growing season. This factor caused the vines to produce a light crop of small and concentrated berries. Temperatures were consistent and mild from May through July, ensuring even ripening.

Moderate weather persisted into August, allowing flavors in the Zinfandel to develop slowly, showcasing the complexity derived from the Montelena Estate's diverse mix of soils. In September the weather pattern changed significantly with a series of 100° days. The heat quickly drove up ripeness levels in the Zinfandel, giving the grapes an intense wild berry charm that is balanced by classic, complex Zin character from the cool growing season.

Vintage Weather

Cool Variable. Rainfall was right at average for the season, but most came in November-December. A challenging vintage with a generally cool growing season, lack of spring rain and excessive heat at harvest. Vine stress and very small berry size led to a very low yield crop, especially in Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines are concentrated with good flavor and balance.

Tasting Notes

In the glass the wine has a classic, deep purple-ruby color, showing its concentration. The striking nose delivers a bright berry aroma with hints of briar, spice and a touch of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is big and fruity with fresh, round raspberry flavors that follow the nose. The texture is both zesty and silky smooth at the same time with nice, soft tannins and an overall medium body. Our Zinfandel is a classic table wine that you can enjoy with food or on its own.



Production and Technical Data

Harvest Dates:	Aug. 27 to Sept. 21
Bottling Date:	July 2004
Release Date:	March 2005
Production:	3700cases
Vineyards:	The Montelena Estate%
Appellation:	Napa Valley
Time in Oak:	16 months
Sugar at Harvest:	24.5 ° brix