

2017 Katz Vineyard Zinfandel

DRY CREEK VALLEY | SONOMA COUNTY

The Katz Vineyard was planted in 1900 as a “Mixed Black” vineyard with Zinfandel the primary variety as was the fashion of the time. Over the past century, the gravelly soil has encouraged deep root systems that thrive on its terroir highlighting why Zinfandel, when planted in the right microclimate, is California’s premier heritage variety.

THE VINTAGE

A wet winter set the stage for explosive canopy growth. Heat began to build in early June and sustained through summer yielding vigorous shoot and leaf growth. There was a bit of cooling then one heat wave after another, bringing an early start to picking. The grape yield at Katz Vineyard, usually just slightly more than one ton to the acre, was even lower this year. The upside blessing of this being fruit with exceptional flavor.

WINEMAKING NOTES

Planted to a classic “Mixed Black” field blend with a preponderance of Zinfandel, the 2-acre Katz Vineyard also has Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, and Carignane making this site truly special. Dry farming intensified the flavors and we picked at night to obtain the coolest fruit, meticulously hand-sorting at the winery, and de-stemming without crushing. The grapes were handled in a modified Burgundian vinification approach using small, open-top fermenters, “cool” soaking, punching down by hand daily, and gentle basket pressing to fully express the terroir. Barrel aging exclusively in long air-dried (three years) French oak of only light-medium toast (25% new) focused fruit and terroir.

THE WINE

The pre-Prohibition field blend (who doesn’t love a mystery?) with heritage clone Zinfandel from ancient vines makes this a remarkable and indulgent wine. Old vine character is apparent in the nose with forward aromas of dried fruits, spice, plum blossom, dark brambleberry, loganberry and subtle earthiness. The berry/spice-centric characters plus notes of anise and tapenade lead into a seamless texture with wonderful layers. The non-Zinfandel components support a balance that is both full-bodied and “light on its feet” at the same time. It will age gracefully for six to eight years (2026-2028). Enjoy on its own and contemplate in a nice big glass or savor it with marbled steak, candied maple bacon in a quiche, Stilton, lentil soup, paella, or lamb shanks.

TECHNICAL NOTES

HARVESTED BOTTLED.....	September 5, 2017 January 17, 2019
APPELLATION.....	Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County
VINEYARDS.....	100% Katz Vineyard, organically-farmed
COMPOSITION.....	80% Zinfandel with balance “Mixed Black” field blend of Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, and Carignane
FERMENTATION.....	Small, open-top fermenters with punching down by hand 1-4 times per day
BARREL AGING.....	15 months total; 100% 3-year air-dried French oak (25% new), light-medium toast
PRODUCTION.....	86 cases
STATS.....	15.4 % ABV pH 3.37 TA 0.71
RETAIL PRICE.....	\$65
WINEMAKER.....	Hugh Chappelle

