

2009 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY ZINFANDEL



Vineyards:	Calistoga Vineyards Brandlin Vineyard Fore Family
Composition:	86% Zinfandel 10% Syrah 4% Grenache
Harvest Date:	September 30, October 8, & 12
Fermentation:	15 days average up to 80°
Oak aging:	17 months French & American 30% New
Bottling Date:	April 5, 2011
Production:	659 cases

I began the “Peter Franus Napa Valley Zinfandel” label in 2002 to allow me more blending flexibility and to hone down the number of wines in my portfolio. My plan was to reduce confusion and vineyard designation sprawl, while creating a wine with a little more immediate quaffability. The vineyard sources vary somewhat from year to year, but the goal is always the same—to provide a good value, balanced, and delicious wine in a world of Zinfandel that often delivers the opposite.

In 2009, Calistoga was the source of fruit that provided plummy, lush and fruity wine with an impression of sweetness. Jim Fore’s spectacular vineyard on Cobb Mountain at 3000 feet elevation is the source of awesome Syrah and Grenache that contribute a spectrum of spice, flavors, and depth to broaden the scope of the wine. And finally, I decided to throw in a bit of Brandlin, our amazing 85-year-old vineyard on Mount Veeder, to provide a little additional backbone and depth. The components work beautifully together.

2009 will be discussed and evaluated in two ways—before the rains and after the rains. It was a beautiful, mild, growing season with slow, great flavor development in the grapes. Everything before the rains arguably are equal to anything of this decade. Fortunately, we lucked out on the pre-rain side.

Our 2009 Napa Valley Zinfandel is medium dark ruby—great color for Zinfandel. The wine offers bright, deep aromas of blueberry jam, white pepper, and coffee accentuated by notes of the usual baking spices—clove, cinnamon, and allspice. The wine is mouth-filling and rich, but with the structure that holds the wine in check. With lots of classic Zinfandel berry character and a bit of chocolate, the wine is “friendly” and is sure to evoke quite a few smiles. Our signature.

There is a tendency to beat up on Zinfandel—that is too overdone and over the top. One of my great satisfactions when I present my Zins is to hear the comments acknowledging the restraint in the wines and the drinking pleasure that they offer. What a novel idea!