



N A P A V A L L E Y Z I N F A N D E L
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VINEYARDS: Rancho Chimiles, Brandlin, Mead Ranch

COMPOSITION: 100% Zinfandel

HARVEST DATE: September 6, 7, 30; October 8, 2002

FERMENTATION: 21 days average, up to 86°

MACERATION: 18 days average

OAK AGING: 15 months, 100% French Oak, 33% new, "Burgundian" Coopers

BOTTLING DATE: March 23, 2004

PRODUCTION: 1900 cases - 750ml, 150 cases - 375ml

Most of you who know my wines are familiar with my vineyard-designated Zins, so what's this "Napa Valley" all about? Invariably, as I taste through the cellar, whether alone or with fellow wine-geeks, I find myself toying around with combinations and blends and what-ifs? There is perhaps a handful of great vineyards that can consistently deliver the complete and impeccably balanced wine. The truth of it is, however, that the ability to blend can most often result in a wine that is more layered, more interesting, and more memorable. A somewhat incomplete wine on its own is magically transformed as it becomes part of a blend. Plus, it keeps my life as winemaker much more interesting and challenging!

The marvelous Zinfandel emerging from Terry Wilson's Rancho Chimiles reflects his meticulous care and the beautiful hillside location of this vineyard. Deep berry flavors, lively acidity, and great color are the hallmarks. A leaner body, but wonderful spice comes from Mead. And then the great old vines from Brandlin fill in any remaining gaps. We are in great company when we sit down to a glass of this Zinfandel.

Many Cabernets would love to see the deep, dark, ruby displayed in this wine. Creamy cinnamon, white pepper notes, rose petal and sweet vanilla overtones lead you in to an extravaganza of cassis, boysenberry, and blueberry jam. Raspberries and allspice fill out the mouth in a wine that is serious and playful at the same time. And it won't require much of a search to discover depth of flavor here.

This is a bold, rich wine. But it is reigned in by a structure and focus that separate it from the pack and convert "oh, I don't like Zinfandel" into Peter Franus converts.