

2005 PETER FRANUS BRANDLIN VINEYARD ZINFANDEL



Vineyards:	Brandlin Vineyard 100% Mount Veeder
Composition:	98% Zinfandel 2% Charbono, Mourvèdre, Carignane
Harvest Date:	October 1, 2005
Fermentation:	84°
Maceration:	17 days
Oak aging:	15 months 100% French Oak 40% new "Burgundian Coopers"
Bottling Date:	February 14, 2007
Production:	668 cases 750ml

As my mother used to say when I would take her up to Brandlin Vineyard, high in the hills of Mount Veeder, "this is as close to heaven as I am going to get." It's a magnificent and magical setting where you can truly feel the energy that ultimately finds its way into the wine. There are many well-made technically sound wines out in the marketplace, but few can capture the soul and personality offered by Brandlin.

In the early 1920s, Henry Brandlin and sons Richard and Chester began planting vines on an eastern exposure hillside 1200 feet above the Napa Valley floor. Today these are probably the oldest vines on Mount Veeder, and they continue to produce intensely flavored grapes, growing for all these years without any irrigation other than the winter and spring rains. The vines are head-trained, independent of any trellis, and without lots of vineyard manipulation, they perform every year. I have worked with this vineyard since 1991, and it is impossible to point to a "weak" vintage.

In 2005, late spring rains delayed flowering of the vines, but the summer months were mild, followed by warm, nearly perfect conditions. The cool late summer was nerve-racking, but the long slow ripening without the typical heat spikes during harvest resulted in long hang time and wonderful flavor and color concentration in the grapes.

As for the wine, an unmistakable Brandlin terroir always announces itself—crushed stone, bramble fruit, baking spices, bay, truffle and earth. The wine always has a depth, focus, structure, and complexity uncommon in Zinfandel. That is the hallmark of the Brandlin Vineyard. This 2005 is a seductive, voluptuous, and seamless wine that will bring a smile to your face. The finish is smooth and long with no hard edges, and aging in French oak adds another layer of complexity and elegance.

Not that this wine needs any more energy, but I chose to bottle it on Valentine's Day just in case anything was missing!