

2007 PETER FRANUS BRANDLIN VINEYARD ZINFANDEL



Vineyards:	Brandlin Vineyard 100% Mount Veeder
Composition:	92% Zinfandel 8% Charbono, Mourvèdre, Carignane
Harvest Date:	October 3, 2007
Fermentation:	15 days, peak temperature 84°
Maceration:	18 days total before pressing
Oak aging:	16 months 100% French Oak 40% new "Burgundian Coopers"
Bottling Date:	March 11, 2009
Production:	980 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.

2007 is a wonderful vintage. The growing season got off to an early start, and good ripening conditions throughout the summer resulted in a harvest that started on the earlier side. It was an outstanding year for Zinfandel, and the wines offer lush, ripe, flavors with very supple tannins and more immediate appeal than those from other vintages. Be careful, however, not to automatically dismiss wines from more challenging vintages. Those wines may often deliver in ways that are equally intriguing. It's all about stylistic preference, not necessarily which is "the best."

As for the wine. Dark ruby in color, the aromas identify the unique character of Brandlin, offering red raspberry, lavender, white pepper, clove, ginger, anise, and ripe plum notes. The mouth is voluptuous, seductive, and lush, with a low tannin profile. Good acidity conveys liveliness. There is a soul and personality that says "Brandlin."

Honestly, there is no other vineyard in the world quite like it. It is a privilege to work with such magnificent fruit!