

2006 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY ZINFANDEL



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NAPA VALLEY ZINFANDEL

Vineyards: Rancho Chimiles
Brandlin Vineyard
Dalraddy Vineyard

Composition: 100% Zinfandel

Harvest Date: Sept 26, Oct 6, & 18

Fermentation: 21 days average, up to 84°

Maceration: 15 days average

Oak aging: 16 months
French, Hungarian, American
35% New American

Bottling Date: March 20, 2008

Production: 1450 cases 750ml

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—to reduce confusion and vineyard designation sprawl. My goal was to create a wine with a little more immediate quaffability. In 2005, grapes came from a single vineyard, in 2006, three.

Terry Wilson has supplied me with awesome Cabernet Sauvignon since 1996. A few years ago as Terry and I walked around the vineyard with the proverbial kicking of dirt, we decided it was time to give Zinfandel a try. We selected a beautiful hillside bowl through which the afternoon winds blow—toughening skins and increasing intensity was the thought. With a decade of age on the vines, the resulting wines display increasing depth and complexity and provide an attractive backbone to the wine.

2006 was a long, cool, growing season that started relatively late for us and extended well into October. The wines display good acidity and firmer tannins than 2005, resulting in a generally more angular structure. I am tempted to call the vintage more “classical” and “serious” because of those features. That doesn’t mean “serious” is less fun or delicious to drink, but they are more appropriate for and less competitive with food.

Because the grapes for the 2006 vintage came from three different locations in Napa Valley—west, southeast, and northeast, each contributes slightly different components resulting in a more interesting and complex style.

Medium ruby in color, the wine offers an inviting nose of spice, roasted coffee, sweet oak, blackberry, and a hint of mint. Berry and black cherry flavors dominate the palate with an initial sensation of sweetness and creaminess, quickly brought in check by a brightness and liveliness that linger well into the finish.

Tonight I’m preparing a simple vegetarian tomato sauce over homemade fettucini. I think the rest of the bottle will drink well with that dish!