



CHATEAU MONTELENA WINERY
ESTABLISHED 1882

2014 Calistoga Zinfandel

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, February 2017

INTRODUCTION

In showcasing our wines, I get asked quite frequently about our “recipe” or how we go about making blends. In truth, there is no recipe. Every year, each wine is re-invented and we regularly experiment with how to improve and tell the story of each vintage in the glass. This Zinfandel is no exception. In honor of Jim Barrett, we were able to procure some bona fide Irish oak barrels from our friends across the pond - just for this wine. In all likelihood, this is the first Irish oak used in California winemaking in over a century. It’s distinctive, rustic, and adds character to our hearty, classic Zinfandel. Moreover, it’s a treat to be able to offer this in limited quantities as a unique interpretation of a wine that’s been in our DNA for decades. We’re not sure if we’ll see this one again.

VINTAGE WEATHER

2014 was ideal for the style of Zinfandel we like to make. With our combination of Primitivo and old vine Zinfandel plantings, it’s not unheard of to see wild deviations in ripening across a single block. However, the mild spring and subsequent temperate summer led to almost perfect uniformity and allowed us to pick large swathes of the property in quick succession. Flavors remained ripe and rich throughout harvest with the fruit requiring minimal hand-sorting on the crush pad.

NOSE

In the glass, the nose is dominated by cocoa, tobacco, and dried cherry. The woody, briary character of old vine Zinfandel is quite prominent but with time un.masks beautiful notes of lavender, cassis, and fresh mint.

PALATE

Fresh cranberry, a hallmark of the Primitivo in the blend, mingles with roasted walnut notes and subtle hints of cinnamon and clove. The supple tannins are present throughout and amble between earthiness and minerality.

FINISH

The transition to the finish is decidedly old world in style, with dark chocolate, cigar box, and a *garrigue* character that’s rare for American wine. Chefs take note.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

September 13th - 28th

ALCOHOL

14.5%

BLEND

100% Zinfandel/Primitivo

BARREL AGING

16 months, French, Irish, and American Oak, 20% New

BOTTLING DATE

April 2016

RELEASE DATE

March 2017

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton