

ZINFANDEL 2003

INTRODUCED TO THE VINEYARD FROM CALIFORNIA IN 1972, ZINFANDEL IS A PARTICULARLY DEMANDING VARIETY BOTH IN THE VINEYARD AND THE WINERY. CAPE MENTELLE'S ZINFANDEL COMMANDS A 'CULT' FOLLOWING FOR ITS BIG, RICH FULL-BODIED STYLE.

APPEARANCE

"Smoke on the water".

NOSE

With sweet, spicy aromas reminiscent of mince pies and panforte this zin is a festive feast!

PALATE

The palate opens with hints of fresh orange peel before developing the panforte and dark chocolate flavours found on the nose. The palate is firm, ripe and full with a lively texture and long finish. This zin is ready to drink now or cellar for up to six years.

VINTAGE AND VINEYARD

A mild winter led to an early budburst. Spring was cool, wet and windy which slowed shoot growth. By December the weather had warmed up and we enjoyed some mild to very warm days until early March when it became very hot. Rain fell mid-March giving the vines some relief but the cool and cloudy conditions lingered giving just one week of perfect weather in April to harvest the rest of the reds before another larger front passed over. Grapes are primarily sourced from the Estate Vineyard, planted in 1972, as well as the McHenry Vineyard, planted in 1994 and our Foxcliffe Vineyard, planted in 1999. All sites share similar soil types, growing on deep gravel laterite soils derived from decomposed ironstone over clay sub soils. The Estate vines are dry farmed.

WINEMAKING TECHNIQUE

Due to the hot conditions of early March there was a flurry of hand picking to keep pace with the fast shrivelling berries. All the zinfandel was harvested between 6 and 11 March. Sugar levels were rather high while acid levels were still around 12 grams/litre. Skin colour and tannin ripeness were lower than average. After crushing the must is allowed to soak for several days prior to fermentation to soften up the raisins before being inoculated with a vigorous yeast strain. The wine steadily ferments to dryness in barrel by springtime and naturally completes malolactic fermentation. We use 50% new oak barrels, primarily French, for a total of 20 months.

CLOSURE

Screwcap

CAPE MENTELLE

MARGARET RIVER

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