



## HISTORIC ZINFANDEL | VENGE VINEYARDS & CROIX ESTATE SHARE THE GOOD STUFF

TO THINK, *from Croatia to California*, Zinfandel first made its splash in Boston in 1832 where a vine nursery owner sold the first strain for mass planting.

72 years later our Croix Estate Vineyard was planted to 39-acres in sections to Zinfandel, Carignan, Alicante Bouchet, Petite Sirah, and Mataro by original owners Dina Arata, Ruth Carli, and Lilli Marsh. When we purchased the property, we quickly converted the ranch to organic farming, bringing the health and balance back into the land, and re-named the ten-acre lot appropriately our Croix 1904 Estate Vineyard. It is truly amazing to witness a property with this much history, breathing new life into this historic wine.

A mere 54 years after the variety made it to our country's eastern shores, the Monte Rosso Vineyard was planted in 1886, primarily to Zinfandel. One cannot imagine the sand it took to horse, cart, and chart 1300 feet to the top of that mountain. We like to say the ground is red because of the blood, sweat, and tears that were shed establishing that vineyard. That red, volcanic earth lured Emanuel and Benjamin to the top of that moon-scaped rock like a siren on a beach and, while San Franciscan 49ers were still mining gold, they struck a rich vein of California vineyard history to come.

As the Sonoma migration moved northward, the Grist Vineyard was established in 1923 on the top of Bradford Mountain, in Dry Creek - an area that is divine for growing old-vine Zinfandel. In fact, we often say, Zinfandel is to Dry Creek Valley as Cabernet Sauvignon is to Napa Valley. No region in California grows Zinfandel with such balanced stature, in our opinions, and the Hambrecht family is making all of the right moves on this vineyard site, most importantly, operating a California Certified Organic Farm. And, a farm it is. This place is a touch of old-school Sonoma County heaven.

Our family-owned wineries are expanding our horizons with both Venge Vineyards and Croix Estate because we cannot imagine surrendering to the momentum of mediocrity.

With our journey comes you – our travel mate and the benefactor of all that we find along the way. We hope you will find these three historic, old-vine Zinfandels to be intellectually curious and deeply satisfying in their diversity of character. Our hope is that you pour a glass (or two, or three) and have that moment that makes you feel... *WOW!*

What a refreshing moment. We LOVE sharing it with you.

## VENGE 2021 GRIST BLOCK SIX

OLD-VINE ZINFANDEL | GRIST VINEYARD | BRADFORD MOUNTAIN, DRY CREEK VALLEY

Resting majestically 1000 feet above sea level at the top of Bradford Mountain, Grist Vineyard is named for the old grist mill on the property from when the mountaintop was first planted to Zinfandel in the late 1800s by Dry Creek's early Italian immigrants. The vineyard is now owned by Sonoma County's Hambrecht family, where four generations of organic farming have proven a trusted hand at producing fruit to perfection. The 200+ acre property includes 70 acres planted mostly with Zinfandel and Syrah, but also smaller blocks of Petite Sirah, Sauvignon Blanc, and Viognier grapes. The volcanic, red soils — Boomer loam and Stonyford loam — are reminiscent of Tuscany's terra rosa. We source Zinfandel fruit from the "mother" blocks planted in 1900. In addition to vineyards, the property includes two family homes, two barns, two chicken coops, an orchid greenhouse, a fruit orchard, avocado trees, olive trees, fifty Meyer lemon trees, beehives, and a pig pen. This is pure, Sonoma County dirt.

The bid to name Zinfandel California's "State Varietal" may have failed, but this red wine grape, grown extensively in California since the mid-1800s, is grown in few other places in the world. When planted to well-drained, alluvial, hillside, and mountain vineyards that are warm but not too hot, like those found throughout Sonoma County's vast expanse, Zinfandel can produce wines with stunning complexity and character, featuring dark berry fruit concentrations and peppery spices. A beautiful accompaniment to a broad diversity of edibles, or savored on its own, old-vine Zinfandel has found a place in our heart.

### WINEMAKER'S Record

The nose on this wine is populated with an array of black currants, fig jam, and ripe plums, making this brambly Zinfandel a delight to the senses. Cinnamon and sweet tobacco are woven together with an undelaying essence of white pepper, wood spice, and tangy acidity. Full bodied with silky, well-balanced mountain-fruit tannins supporting the mid-palate lead to a refreshing lift of bright acidity on the finish.



### PRODUCTION ESSENTIALS

Method | *Pellenc* Sorting & Destemming, Via Gravity Flow to Open Top Fermenters  
Utilizing 100% Native Yeast Primary and Secondary Fermentations.  
Aging Regimen | 40% New French Oak  
Aging | 15 Months  
Production | 10 Barrels

## CROIX 2021 1904 ESTATE

OLD-VINE ZINFANDEL | CROIX ESTATE VINEYARD | RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

Our Croix Estate Vineyard Zinfandel is a heritage vineyard site located next door to the Fanucchi Wood Road Vineyard and across the drive from the Chelli and Belloni Vineyards near the intersection of Woolsey and Wood Road.

**Planted in 1904**, the original vineyard comprised of 39 acres planted in sections to Zinfandel, Carignan, Alicante Bouchet, Petite Sirah, and Mataro. Original owners Dina Arata, Ruth Carli, and Lilli Marsh farmed the vineyards up until 1946 when the vineyard was sold to Cattabriga Gaetano who renamed the contiguous property, Cattabriga Gaetano Estate. Cattabriga had three daughters, Augusta, Josephine, and Inez. In addition to the original estate farmhouse (now Croix Estate's farmhouse), two homes were built where Inez (now the Belloni Vineyard) and Augusta (now the Chelli Vineyard) lived with their families. In 1973 the land was parceled and sold into three sections: Robert Rue Vineyard, Belloni Vineyard, and Chelli vineyard, all bearing the new owners' names respectively. In 2016, Kirk Venge purchased the 10-acre Robert Rue Vineyard section, which consisted of 90% Zinfandel and 10% Alicante Bouchet.

Our estate vineyard is dry farmed on low pH/fertility sandy loam soils, set in a temperate growing environment where cool, foggy mornings give way to warm summer days, producing bold and powerful results. Old vine Zinfandel and Alicante Bouchet on these soils produces smaller cluster sets, naturally reducing yields and concentrating delicious goodness. The impact of Alicante Bouchet on the wine shows in color concentration and perfumed aromatics.

### WINEMAKER'S Record

Lively aromatics of boysenberry, blueberry, black cherry, and lavender catch curiosity immediately. The wine's hue sheets the glass with jet black ink, indicative of Alicante Bouchet's influence on the concentration of color. The mouthfeel is a viscous, luscious harmony of star anise, black plum, blackberries, and savory sweet bliss.

### PRODUCTION ESSENTIALS

Method | *Pellenc* Sorting & Destemming, Via Gravity Flow to Stainless Fermenters

Utilizing 100% Native Yeast Primary and Secondary Fermentations.

Aging Regimen | 50% New American Oak

Aging | 16 Months

Production | 13 Barrels



## CROIX 2021 MOON MOUNTAIN

OLD-VINE ZINFANDEL | MONTE ROSSO VINEYARD | MOON MTN DISTRICT, SONOMA COUNTY

Sitting at 1300 feet elevation along the western facing slopes of the Mayacamas Mountain Range, the Monte Rosso Vineyard commands significant attention as a historical winegrowing reference point in Sonoma County. Emanuel Goldstein and his business partner Benjamin Dreyfus were business partners in the grocery business in San Francisco in the early 1880s when they decided to move out to Sonoma Valley and begin cultivating and planting Monte Rosso Vineyard. At the time the land was known as Monte Rosso (red earth), but the vineyard was originally called Mount Pisgah. The first vines were planted in 1886, with some of the original Zinfandel and Semillon planted during that period still producing fruit today. In addition to planting the vineyard, a three-story, vertically integrated, gravity-fed winery was completed and named Mount Peak. Prohibition had taken its toll on the family and the family made the decision to sell to Louis M. Martini in 1938, who had his namesake winery located in St. Helena. Louis planted the first Cabernet vines in 1940 and slowly grew vineyard plantings to 250 acres, with a majority Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Semillon, and Riesling making the composition of the vineyard. Three generations of the Martini family continued to farm the vineyard up until 2002 when the vineyard and Louis M. Martini winery was sold to E. & J. Gallo Vineyards. Today, the vineyard has ten varieties planted including the old Semillon, Zinfandel, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Notable producers utilizing the vineyard fruit are Louis M. Martini, Biale, Rock Wall, Repris, and Carlisle.

The site historically produces wines of high acidity across all varieties due to the volcanic influence and minerality in the homogenous Red Hill Loam soil, the southern facing aspect of the vineyard, and the elevation. This is certainly true of our production Zinfandel from the property.

### WINEMAKER'S Record

Medium to deep garnet-purple colored, this old vine Zinfandel is opulently scented with baked raspberries, prunes, orange rinds and sweet fruitcake with wafts of Chinese five spice and underbrush. A big, rich, ripe, and exotic wine with a fresh and racy line of spicy, black fruit preserves, fig jam, and dried currants finishing long and chewy.



### PRODUCTION ESSENTIALS

Method | 100% *Pellenc* Destemmed And Gravity Fed Open Top Fermentation, 5-day cold soak, 100% Carbonic Maceration With Hand Punch-Downs, Utilizing 100% Native Yeast Primary and Secondary Fermentations.

Aging Regimen | 75% New French Oak

Aging | 16 Months

Production | 5 Barrels