



CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2015 Calistoga Zinfandel

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, November 2017

INTRODUCTION

As a vine, Zinfandel is a survivor and the 2015 vintage showcases that quality beautifully. Long before we had drip irrigation, subsurface soil mapping, and even linear trellising, Zinfandel thrived in the California sun. The diversity of wines that can be created from this thin-skinned, finicky variety is staggering as is evidenced from hardy plantings in Lodi to Calistoga to the Sonoma coast. It's this ability to soak up the best of each vintage, whether head-trained and dry-farmed in stout, volcanic rock or gracefully trained in fertile, alluvial beds that endear Zinfandel to so many winemakers and the public alike. There's something hallowed in the old, war-torn vines that have endured many a challenging growing season coupled with the vitality and exuberance of younger plantings that allow us to create this truly compelling wine.

VINTAGE WEATHER

The 2015 vintage will be remembered as a warm growing season overall, with an early start to harvest and quite low yields. The effects of the drought induced vine stress early in the spring and high temperatures persisted throughout the summer. These conditions forged incredible density and ripeness of flavor in the fruit and really let the old vine character show. Typically, these vintages need some time in glass for the flavors and texture of the wine to integrate.

NOSE

The rich, ripe character of the vintage comes across immediately on the nose with blackberry jam and cocoa along with cinnamon, clove and sandalwood.

PALATE

The brambly, smoky character of the old vine Zinfandel is on display here as notes of tobacco, flint, and bacon fat come along with fresh figs, black walnut, and plum sauce.

FINISH

The finish comes gracefully amidst dusty tannins, dark chocolate, black pepper and crème de menthe.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

August 21 – September 16

ALCOHOL

14.5%

BLEND

100% Zinfandel/Primitivo

BARREL AGING

16 months in French, Irish, and American Oak, 15% new

BOTTLING DATE

April 2017

RELEASE DATE

March 2018

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton