

1999 Whaler Vineyard ZINFANDEL

Mendocino

What To Expect From This Wine

With zinfandel, our goal is to produce a wine with strong and dense fruit, liveliness, personality and beauty—and one that expresses a sense of place. Achieving this goal, we believe, requires focusing on growing the best grapes and then handling them gently. We hope, above all, to avoid over ripeness, excessive wood, excessive alcohol, and any other factor that would mask the nuances of flavors so unique to this personality-rich variety.

A Very Special Place

The Whaler Vineyard faces the warm afternoon sun on a gentle southwest facing rocky slope on the Talmage Bench in Mendocino County (just east of the Russian River about 10 miles south of the town of Ukiah.) The excellent exposure and the well-drained soils allow for ideal ripening of zinfandel.

About the Harvest

The 1999 season was long and cool, prolonging the ripening season for most grape varieties well into October. However, our growers' zinfandel vineyard sites are bench land and hillside, with perfect aspect of exposure to allow ease of ripening. At Whaler this is especially true. The site helps overcome Zin's natural tendency to ripen unevenly, and a preponderance of small berries deliver richness and concentration. The 1999 Whaler Vineyard was harvested in early September.

The Gentle Art of Winemaking

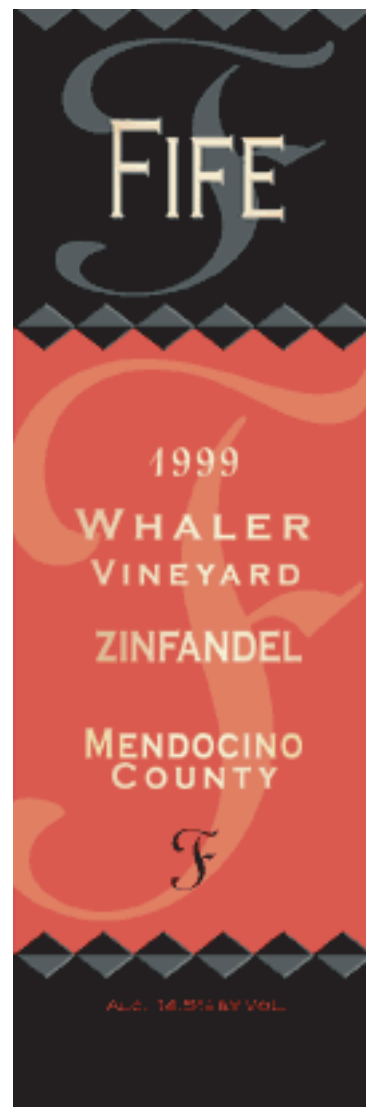
Our winemaking philosophy is simple: obtain grapes with personality, handle them minimally, and then focus on blending to bring out nuance and character in the wine. We depend upon the vineyard to create the fruit, the density and the concentration. In the winemaking process we seek to assure balance, elegance, texture and length of flavor. The 1999 Whaler Zinfandel was bottled in July 2000.

Tasting Notes

This is a wine that opens quickly to soft, jammy flavors. Black cherry fruit -leather, dense chocolatey-char, mouthwatering, multilayered depth of fruit.

Varietal Composition: 95% zinfandel, 5% petite syrah

Alcohol: 14.5% Cases Produced: 1462



Mature Coolea - Ireland

This cow's milk cheese is made by the Willems family in the Irish hills of County Cork. Dick and Helene Willems, a married couple of Dutch descent, began their adventure in cheesemaking when they quit the restaurant business and toured Europe in search of a more peaceful place to live. After brief stints in France and Spain, the family settled down on a farm near the inland town of Coolea in Cork. Not wanting to return to the restaurant business, the couple needed to find a new line of work. Given the excellent grazing conditions on their farm, they inevitably turned to cheesemaking. Owing to their Dutch heritage, they decided to make an Irish version of Gouda. The presence of wild Irish herbs in the grazing fields gives Coolea a richer, fruitier flavor than Dutch Gouda. Mature Coolea, which is aged for over 6 months, is piquant with a delicious, fresh aftertaste.