

Giuseppe & Luisa
ZINFANDEL

The year was 1899 when Giuseppe and Luisa Martinelli planted three acres of Zinfandel in the little town of Forestville nestled in the Russian River Valley. The special site they chose was a very steep slope of 60-degrees with a southeastern exposure. The small vineyard supplied enough wine for the family's home meals and to share with friends at the customary Sunday gatherings held in the nearby groves of Redwood trees. The rich vino also supplemented the family's income from their small farm. The old vineyard is now known as Jackass Hill and remains the steepest non-terraced hillside vineyard in Sonoma County.

Nearly one century later Giuseppe and Luisa's grandson, Lee Martinelli Sr., followed in their footsteps by planting a Zinfandel vineyard. The site of the Jackass Hill vineyard is very unique and Lee believed in the great quality of the scion. He grafted budwood from the centurion vines onto devigorating rootstocks and planted them one meter by two meters apart, equating to about 2,000 vines per acre, on a rocky knoll above the Martinelli Winery. This small vineyard is trained on a vertical trellis system with the fruit hanging just 24 inches above the ground. The grapes are thinned down to between two and three pounds of fruit per vine. These practices all insure mature fruit flavors in the wine as well as even ripening.

The grapes are picked between 25 and 26 degrees brix and are hand selected at harvest time by Lee Martinelli Sr., who walks through the vineyard and tastes them. The fruit samples are then brought to the winery lab where wine maker Helen Turley tastes the juice and decides when to pick according to the flavor concentration. After picking, the whole berries undergo a long cool fermentation to generate skin contact and expose fruit character and are fermented with wild yeast. The juice is gravity fed into small oak barrels with a touch of residual sugar remaining to complete the fermentation process in barrel until dry. It rests in 75% new French oak on its gross lees for ten months. The grapes, juice, and then wine are minimally handled. This wine is neither heat nor cold stabilized and is unfined and unfiltered.

Wine Maker: Helen Turley

Assistant Wine Maker: Bryan Kvamme

"Giuseppe & Luisa" Zinfandel in the Press

1997 Vintage

91 pts. Steve Tanzer ~ 92 pts. Wine Spectator

1998 Vintage

94 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 94 pts. Steve Tanzer

1999 Vintage

95 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 94 pts. Steve Tanzer

2000 Vintage

92 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2001 Vintage

90-92 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2002 Vintage

95 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 90 pts. Wine Spectator

2003 Vintage

90 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

...“There are plenty of sweet currants and loads of pepper...Roasted meats and a liqueur of mincemeat and spice box are part of this package, and the wine is impressive, full-bodied...”