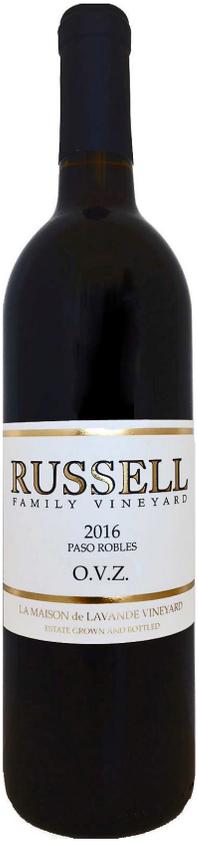


RUSSELL

FAMILY VINEYARD

O. V. Z. 2016 Reserve



The inspiration for this Zinfandel, which is always one of our best Zinfandels, came from 1993 when we decided to make our first Reserve Zinfandel. It was from a small block of grapes that belonged to an old wine-making family in Healdsburg, California. We called the wine after the vineyard San Lorenzo Vineyard. We only made this wine for two years as the family was jealous over the quality and accolades that we received on the wine the first year. It received 93 points in the Wine Spectator and was named number 30 on their top 100 list. They were so upset as they were known as a Zinfandel winery that they said we could not even use the name of the vineyard for the second vintage. I decided to call the wine O.V.Z. It is a wine that we only make in the best years. In the last 10 years we have produced a 2007, a 2010, a 2013, and a 2016. There are 263 cases of 12 bottles produced of the 2016.

GRAPES: Zinfandel, Petite Sirah

VINEYARD: The grapes are grown in two of our Estate Vineyards. The Vineyard located behind the winery called Texas Road Vineyard and the Vineyard located in The Willow Creek District at our home. The Willow Creek district is probably the highest rated best growing area of Paso Robles. The wine is about 85 % Zinfandel from our Live Oak Vineyard and 15 % Petite Sirah from the vineyard behind the winery. The Petite Sirah was picked from the warmer vineyard on September 24th at 26.5 brix and cold soaked for 7 days and racked to small oak older barrels while the Zinfandel was picked on October 15th at 25.8 brix and cold soaked for 12 days and pressed to both Demi-muid and small barrels. The key to the wine is the Live Oak Vineyard and the fact that it is 16 miles from the ocean and is the coolest area of Paso Robles.

TERRAIN: The Live Oak soil is very Calcareous with a soil PH between 7.8 and 8.2 with up to 20 % free lime and very rocky. The vines are close spaced at 1 meter by 2 meter and they are almost 2400 vines per acre and there is only a very small 3-4 acre block of Zinfandel that runs in an East West Direction to not get any intense sunlight which lets the wine get ripe without a lot of raisins and hence prune flavors. In the beginning I did not have a lot of hope for the 2016 vintage. It was the first vintage where we had received normal rainfall in almost 7 years and it followed 2014 and 2015 which we received only 8 inches of rain in two years. 2015 was the worst year in our history and our crop was off over 70 per cent. I truly did not think we would survive that year. I sold most of our grapes that year just to try to pay the bills and kept only a few small lots of grapes that I thought were too good not to make. One such varietal was Zinfandel.

VINIFICATION: The wine seemed OK in barrels when it was first developing but as I tasted it over and over it just kept getting better. I had no intention of making an O.V.Z. Zinfandel. When I was tasting the barrels for the final Blend I noticed the wine that was in Dem-muids had an intensity and complexity the others did not. I did some blending and added a small amount of Petite Sirah. When I had an old vine Zinfandel in Sonoma and the San Lorenzo vineyard in Sonoma always had a small amount of Petite Sirah in a field blend. I picked out the best barrels and blended them together in a tank and pumped them into brand new barrels for about another 6-8 months barrel age and bottled the wine on August 28-2018. The wine has a very modest level of alcohol for a big Zinfandel at 14.9 % and has a natural T.A. of 0.57. I have never added a drop of Tartaric acid as most do in California but instead have taken the approach of only natural acid in my wine. UC Davis would have a stroke to hear that someone is not following their classic recipe for wine acidity. In fact the wine is 100% natural with only yeast and organic yeast food added. There is none of the fake tannins, coloring, and enzymes nor is it run through any of the fancy winemaking machines that adjust PH, concentrate the juice, flash ferment it. The main machine that was used is my 38 year old plate and frame filter to gently filter the wine.

ANALYSIS DATA: Alc. pH:, total acidity:

TASTING NOTES: After a very hard day at harvest we all decided to have steak on the grill and we decided to have this wine. My wife Joanne as usual had the first sip—you have to feed the cook—and she said holly crap where did this come from. I then tasted it and said WOW this might just be the best Zinfandel I have ever bottled. I think it's better than the San Lorenzo. I say I think its better as I only had one or two bottles of the San Lorenzo. It was after harvest I think in 1995 and I went to Italy either just before Thanksgiving and was gone for a couple of weeks. In the old days we did not have computers, cell phones, email etc. When I returned I was told that the San Lorenzo was number 30 on the top 100. I thought great I will have to have a bottle tonight. However the wine was totally gone. In those days I could not afford to have a wine library and our motto was to sell every bottle. My only employee was the tasting room person who was so excited that people actually came to the tasting room to buy wine and distributors actually ordered it. I will not make the same mistake with this OVZ, some will go into the cellar.