

2014 Salvation Late Harvest Zinfandel

Alexander Valley Vineyards and the Wetzel family have a long history with Zinfandel. The legacy began with Sin Zin in 1978 when we produced our first vintage of Alexander Valley Zinfandel for friends and family. Redemption followed in 2001 and Temptation in 2004. Over the years we talked about producing a red dessert wine but our late October rainfall often meant the grapes could not hang long enough on the vine to reach the high brix levels for a dessert wine. California's continuing drought changed that.

The 2014 growing season was very similar to 2013. The ongoing drought combined with a mild winter and spring caused an early bud break, but the overall length of the growing season was similar to past years. The lack of rain did not impact our fruit due to moderate temperatures throughout the growing season and the grapes ripened evenly and reached peak maturity about two weeks earlier than in 2013. While news of the drought dominated conversations everywhere, there was an upside; the grapes had rich, concentrated flavors, much like the 2013s.

The grapes for the second vintage of Salvation were harvested from a tiny two acre vineyard on the east side of Lytton Station Road. The Whipp Vandenberg Vineyard, also known as the SVWW block, was planted in 1981 and was purchased in 2000 by Wendy Whipp and Stewart Vandenberg. AVV fans around the country will recognize the names, we consider both as extended members of the AVV family. Wendy worked with a marketing company that managed AVV sales and Stewart is our Western Regional Manager.

On the morning of October 4th friends and family hand-picked the low yielding site, selecting the ripest clusters to maintain the perfect balance of sweetness and acidity. At the winery, the fruit was de-stemmed and fermented in 1/2 ton macrobins for quite a long time due to the high sugar level. After a light pressing the wine was aged in two older American oak barrels and raked every four months for the first year to soften the tannins.

This dark, rich late harvest Zinfandel has intense aromas of blackberry jam, spice and raspberry. Intriguing flavors of chocolate, candied cherry, molasses, dried fruit, strong spice and blueberry fill the glass. The finish is long and reminiscent of chocolate covered cherries. This wine has a great balance of acidity and sweetness and can be enjoyed today or cellared for several years.

Food Pairing: Rich and balanced enough to enjoy by itself or pair with dark chocolate and raspberry.

Profile:

- Concentrated, great balance of sweetness and acidity
- Chocolate covered cherries

About Alexander Valley Vineyards:

The inspiration for the label was one of the fifty plates created by 19th century French artist Gustave Doré to illustrate John Milton's poem "Paradise Lost". The image of Satan falling from the heavens was etched in wood and completed around 1866. The poem and image have been favorites of Robert Wetzel since he was a teenager, so it was a natural fit for our newest Zinfandel. After quite a bit of brainstorming we modified the image to give it the opposite meaning by flipping the angel around and having him reach toward heaven to clearly depict Salvation.

Technical Data:

Grapes: 100% Zinfandel

Harvest: October 3, 2014

Barrel Regimen: Aged for 24 months in two older American oak barrels

Alcohol: 16.5% **Brix at Harvest:** 36 degrees

Residual Sugar: 10.0g/100ml

pH: 3.30 **TA:** 11.4g/L

SRP: \$40 **Production:** 375ml - 86 cases (12 btl)

