



2015 GAMBA OLD VINE ZINFANDEL

STARR ROAD RANCH VINEYARD RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

2015 season description: The 2015 year delivered another stellar vintage in the Russian River Valley. Despite a lighter crop, one of the earliest seasons on record, and a fourth year of drought, quality was high across the board in the vineyards. The drought conditions and weather during fruit set resulted in uneven grape bunches and very low yields. However, because of our cluster thinning and sorting practices, the fruit from this vintage achieved optimal ripeness and was very flavorful. The growing season began with unseasonably warm temperatures in the late winter and early spring. This resulted in an early bud break and bloom. Colder temperatures in May, during the peak of bloom, caused the uneven fruit set, and also resulted in a much smaller crop for 2015. Because of the drought, the worry early in the season was that the vines wouldn't have enough water for the vegetative cycle, never mind ripening, but thanks to some rain in February and April, the vines managed to thrive.

Yields were down, but this is not surprising, due to drought, bloom issues, and an unprecedented run of three outstanding larger harvests from '12, '13, and '14. Though there wasn't a large yield in 2015, the quality of the crop this year is exceptional, with smaller berries and concentrated fruit flavors. And, though the persistent drought in California posed a monumental challenge to our dry farmed old vines, with their very deep roots, they were able to weather the drought gracefully.

The 2015 vintage was the earliest harvest I can remember as a winegrower. All of the heat, combined with a light crop, led to our early, intense, and very compacted harvest. Due to the heat, ripeness was also hitting its peak in vineyard blocks very close together. The harvest began in earnest and was finished by the beginning of October. We worked hand-in-hand with our vineyard crews, hand harvesting and sorting fruit, both in the vineyards, and again at the winery in typical Gamba fashion, to ensure only the best quality grapes made the cut for the 2015 wines.

Again, due to the drought, berries were smaller and packed with color and flavor and showed outstanding quality. The dark color hinted at the potential for some great structured, extracted wines. All the ferments showed big, rich, ripe fruit in great balance with the tannins, and the color metrics were off the charts. The indigenous yeast fermentation lots showed off explosive aromatics, great concentration and very fine-grained tannins, with plush and ripe flavors. The 2015 season should prove to be another, in an epic string of superior quality vintages for Gamba.

Wine description: The 2015 Gamba Starr Road Ranch Old Vine Zinfandel is nearly opaque to opaque in color density. The deep, dark ruby color hints at the experience yet to come. A medley of stone fruits tease the olfactory senses, notes of plum, red cherry, and ripe berry notes with cedar spice jump out of the glass. The flavors on the palate are full, round and balanced, and offer a composite of cherry, berry and dark chocolate filling the mid-palate, with a silky texture, and a medium to heavy body that is satisfying and mouth-filling, but not overwhelming. An essence of brown spices and cedar nuances are nicely integrated on the smooth finish, leaving the palate ready for the next tasting experience.

Notes:

100% Old Vine Zinfandel, dry farmed, organic fruit, hand harvested, low yields, double hand sorted at harvest. 500cs produced.

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