

2000 Sangiovese

Windsor Oaks Vineyard

Chalk Hill Appellation

Sonoma County

85% Sangiovese

15% Dolchetto

The Vineyard: Windsor Oaks Vineyard lies on a low plateau on the western edge of the Chalk Hill Appellation of Sonoma County, north of Sonoma Valley and east of the Russian River Valley. Aptly named for the chalk-laden, sparse volcanic soil, it is an ideal terroir for this field blend of Sangiovese and Dolchetto, imparting a rich earthiness to the wine that perfectly underscores the fruit. These vines were imported from Tuscany specifically for this vineyard.

The Vintage: 2000 was a mixed vintage that began perfectly with just enough winter rain and a long, cool summer. The grapes we picked in early October were in perfect condition and fully ripe. However, heavy rains arrived in early November, it turned unseasonably cold and never warmed up again. The later varieties had trouble ripening. Fortunately, Windsor Oaks Vineyard was harvested before the rain and cold weather.

The Wine: Handpicking in the morning into small bins, assured prime condition of the grapes. Destemming without crushing retained 40% whole berries. Fermentation actually takes place within the individual berries, retaining the volatile flavors and aromas that otherwise would evaporate off in the warmer fermentation temperature we used to pull a bit more tannin from the skins. Italian Brunello yeast accentuated the fruit's Tuscan heritage and varietal characteristics. The wine was barreled in a combination of French and American oak, 35% of which was new. It did not require fining and was coarsely filtered before bottling to remove the sedimentary solids. While exhibiting the full fruit character and the early approachability typical of Deerfield Ranch wines, our 2000 Chalk Hill Sangiovese has more structure and tannin than the Lake County Sangiovese, giving it greater aging potential.

Tasting Notes: The color is a brilliant, deep garnet. Swirling in the glass reveals substantial legs with lingering color. The aromas are of ripe strawberries, cedar cigar box and violets with an edge of vanilla. The taste fills the palate as a flawlessly expanding ovoid free of edges, leading to a finish that lingers until the next sip. The tannins are evident but not obtrusive; acid is low and well balanced with the fruit and tannin. The wine is very enjoyable now, with all the right signals to suggest long aging potential.

Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemaker: Robert Rex & Michael Browne
Harvested: By hand, October 2, 2000
Brix at harvest: Sangiovese 23.9° Dolchetto 23.9
Acid at harvest: Sangiovese 7.91g/L Dolchetto 4.8g/L
pH at harvest: Sangiovese 3.33pH Dolchetto 3.49pH
Yeast: Brunello
Fermentation: Sangiovese for 18 days, punched down by hand 3x/day
Dolchetto for 8 days, punched down by hand 3x/day
Max. Fermentation Temp: Sangiovese 94°F Dolchetto 88 °F
Malo/Lactic Conversion: 100% in barrel
Blended: 85% Sangiovese, 15% Dolchetto, After second racking in June, 2001
Aging: 12 months, 75% French Oak, 25% American Oak, 35% new
Fining: none
SO₂ at Bottling: 15 ppm.
Alcohol: 13.98%
Bottled: 185 cases on November 7, 2001
Released: April 2002
Awards & Reviews: Silver medal: Sonoma County Harvest Fair;
Silver medal: San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

