

2000 gold Late harvest Botrytis dessert wine

Gold is a unique wine made from over-ripe, super sweet, botrytis-engulfed grapes. Common to most growing regions, Botrytis mold concentrates the sugars as it extracts water from the grapes. The super ripeness allows us to stop the fermentation before the wine becomes dry, retaining unfermented natural sugars, normal alcohol levels, and a residual flavor of the Botrytis. The combination is a unique taste experience unlike anything else in nature.

The 2000 vintage was ideal for the production of this wine as it was wet at the conclusion of harvest. It takes a moist environment for the mold to grow on the grapes and in California, typically without any early fall rain, the weather is too dry for Botrytis. In 2000 we used grapes from two vineyards for the gold, blending Riesling from the Orion Vineyard and Sauvignon Blanc from the Lorenzo Vineyard in Monterey. The Botrytis mold was naturally occurring in both vineyards.

The grapes were hand picked, destemmed and allowed to cold soak for 1 to 4 days. After pressing, they were fermented in a closed tank with a special, alcohol-sensitive yeast isolated from one of the greatest Botrytis wines of all, Trockenbarenausele (TBA) from Germany. The fermentation temperature was kept below 45 °F, taking several months to complete, which increased the glycerin content and mouth feel of the wine. When the alcohol level reaches about 11%, it starts to kill the yeast, at which point we cold-filtered the wine to remove the remaining yeast. After heat and cold stabilization, we bottled the 2000 gold.

Tasting Notes: The exquisite, tall, silk-screened bottle is a delight to the eye. As it is poured, your senses are tantalized by its golden hue. The nose fills your head with lush aromas of ripe apricots, dried peaches and tropical flowers. The taste is exotic, sweet though not cloying, like dried apricots over Cream Brûlée. It's rich and sumptuous with nutty nuances and a long, well balanced finish. **gold** doesn't just go with dessert such as fruit tarts, Bavarian Creams and Creme Brûlée, gold is dessert.

Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemaker:	Robert Rex & Michael Browne
Harvested:	By hand, December 1st, and December 11, 2000
Brix after soak:	26.8 to 28.5 soaked to 33 to 34 Brix
Acid after soak:	5.0 to 6.0g/L raised to 7.5g/L as Tartaric
pH at harvest:	3.67 and 4.0
Yeast:	Barenausele and Trockenbarrenausele
Fermentation:	In stainless refrigerated tank for 8 months
Max. Fermentation Temp:	45 F
Malo/Lactic Conversion:	none
Fining:	Bentonite for heat stability
Filtration:	cold filtered to remove yeast
Free SO ₂ at Bottling:	25 ppm
Bottled:	6,996 bottles, September 5, 2002
Alcohol:	12.5%
Residual Sugar:	13.3%
Released:	March 15, 2004
Awards & Reviews:	not yet reviewed
Age worthiness:	20 years or more, getting more nutty with age

