

Old Vine  
**1997 Zinfandel**  
Dry Creek Valley  
Buchignani Vineyard

**D**eerfield Ranch Winery, in the heart of Sonoma Valley at Kenwood, is a 4000-case winery, specializing in small lots of handmade wines from select vineyards of the California North Coast region. Visitors sample our wines at the *Family Wineries of Sonoma Valley Tasting Room* on Sonoma Highway in Kenwood. Find us on the Web at [www.deerfieldranch.com](http://www.deerfieldranch.com), or call 707 833-5215.

**Vineyard:** Dry Creek Valley in Sonoma County, is the premier appellation for Zinfandel, a varietal unique to California. This vineyard was planted just after WWII by the Buchignani family, pioneering, Dry Creek Valley grape farmers. These dry-farmed, gnarled, old vines produce sparse bunches of incredibly flavorful grapes. Unlike most other varietals, Zins ripen unevenly, old vines even more so, challenging the talents of the winemaker. We get under- and overripe fruit, not only from the same vine, but from the same bunch. 1997 was one of the great vintages of the decade, perhaps the best. The season was long, with an early Spring and long, dry summer. We had no heat spikes near the harvest so the grapes ripened perfectly. Yield was at record levels.

picked and sorted, these grapes were crushed leaving almost 30% whole berries. Fermented in an open-top tanks, they were manually pushed down three times daily during the 16 days on the skins. The yeast, an isolate from the Williams Selim Winery, was used for its tolerance to alcohol and its ability to bring out the unique flavors of Zinfandel. After the new wine was pressed, the primary fermentation continued in the barrel for almost six months. This was quite nerve-wracking, requiring a lot of attention to each barrel. The wine was aged in French and American oak barrels for two years, topped every other week and racked 4 times. From the beginning, this wine exhibited raspberry aromas and complex tastes that filled the senses and expectations.

**Tasting Notes:** This is a huge, extremely full-bodied Zinfandel. The color is a brilliant, dark garnet. The nose is strikingly Zinfandel with nuances of raspberries, chocolate, tobacco, ripe cherries, cedar and oak. The promise of the nose is carried through to the taste. Nothing is out of place. The berry flavors are well-integrated with the oak and the tannins, resulting in a rich explosion of fruit in the middle of the palate. The high alcohol drives the flavor without being hot. The finish is long and lingering. This Zinfandel is great on its own and with rich, red meat, barbecue and chocolate desserts.

**Harvest & Winemaking Data:**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Winemaker:                   | Robert Rex   |
| Harvested:                   | By hand, September 14, 1997                                    |
| Brix at Harvest:             | 22.8 Brix, soaked up to probably 28 Brix or more               |
| Acid at Harvest:             | .65 g/100ml as Tartaric  |
| pH:                          | 3.29   |
| Yeast:                       | Williams Selim   |
| Fermentation:                | In small, open-top fermentors for 16 days, punched 3 times/day |
| Max. Fermentation Temp.:     | 92 F   |
| Malo/Lactic Conversion:      | 100%   |
| Aging:                       | 24 months in 50% French Oak, 50% American Oak, 40% new overall |
| Fining:                      | 2 fresh egg whites/barrel                                      |
| SO <sub>2</sub> at Bottling: | 14 ppm free  |
| Bottled:                     | 311 cases – September 9, 1999                                  |
| Alcohol:                     | 16.4%  |
| Released:                    | November 1, 1999   |
| Awards & Reviews:            | Gold Medal, Sonoma County Harvest Fair                         |

