

1998 Sangiovese

Roumigiuiere Vineyard

Lake County

Deerfield Ranch Winery, in the heart of Sonoma Valley at Kenwood, is a 5000-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*, 9200 Sonoma Highway in Kenwood. Find us on the Web at www.deerfieldranch.com, or call 707 833-5215

The Vineyard: The Roumigiuiere Vineyard is in Lake County, the northern border of both Napa and Sonoma Counties. Lakeport, on the shores of Clear Lake, is warmer than Napa during the day, with cool nights influenced by the lake. Mt. Konocti, a dormant volcano, dominates the landscape. Lakeport has the ideal geology for Sangiovese grapes to thrive, with rich volcanic soil, temperature variations and consistency of growing season. One of its largest, independent growers, the Roumigiuiere Family is dedicated to producing the highest-quality grapes and the advance of local viticulture. They work closely with UC Davis, other winemakers and us, to assure transport of the full character of their fruit to the bottle.

1998 was a cool year following a weak bud-set in '97. (Grapes grow on two-year-old wood, so every vintage really spans two years.) Just before harvest, a warm spell was followed by rain. We were lucky to get the red grapes to ripen. Yield was off 30% overall. The short crop balanced the adverse conditions and this Sangiovese came in tasting fully ripe.

small bins in the morning, assuring that the grapes arrived at the winery in prime condition. Destemming without crushing retained 40% whole berries. We used an Italian Brunello yeast to build on the fruit's Tuscan heritage and vintage variation. The whole berries kept the fermentation slow and on the cool side, retaining the fruity character. This wine called for a gentle hand. The best Sangiovese flavors are fleeting and subtle, easily lost if attention is not paid. The tannins were softened and the fruit flavors unmasked by fining with two egg whites per barrel. We added 3% Cabernet Sauvignon (popular for blending in Tuscany) to increase the length of the finish and add additional complexity. This wine is a true expression of the vintage, terroir, Roumigiuiere viticulture and our winemaking art.

drinking wine. You don't have to be an experienced, red wine drinker to appreciate this one. It has a wonder nose full of strawberries, cherries and flowers. The taste offers a lot of forward fruit with soft tannins and a gentle finish. It will hold your interest even if you favor the big reds. The oak is there but not predominant. There are additional, almost haunting flavors on the sides of the mouth and a taste that keeps growing more complex and interesting as you swish it around. It's a delight by itself and really shines with Mediterranean-style, grilled food.

Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemaker:	Robert Rex
Harvested:	By hand, November 5, 1998
Brix after soak:	22.5°
Acid after soak:	.77g/100ml as Tartaric
pH at harvest:	3.24
Yeast:	Brunello
Fermentation:	12 days, pumped-over three times/day
Max. Fermentation Temp:	85°F
Malo/Lactic Conversion:	100%
Aging:	15 months in 90% French Oak, 10% American Oak, 30% new overall
Fining:	2 fresh egg whites/barrel
SO ₂ at Bottling:	14 ppm
Bottled:	325 cases – March 1, 2000
Released:	May 2000
Awards & Reviews:	not yet submitted for review or competition.

