

2001 Gewurztraminer

Sonoma Valley

Our 2001 Gewurztraminer (Ge-verts'-tra-meener) is from two small vineyards in Sonoma, the Morning Song Vineyard just south of the town of Sonoma and the Ashton Vineyard in Glen Ellen. The Morning Song vineyard is old (we're not sure how old), probably 50 years, and might have been ripped out long ago had the previous owner not abandoned it. Dan Begin, the owner, has worked hard restoring the vineyard, which is struggling to producing a very small crop of about one half ton per acre. The Ashton Vineyard is about 25 years old, is situated on a terraced hillside, and doesn't produce more than about one ton per acre. The age of the vines and the low yields give us grapes that are intensely flavored. The varietal has almost disappeared on the California market, we believe because the name is so hard for Americans to pronounce.

The Wine: The grapes were very laboriously hand picked since the bunches grow close to the trunk and wrap themselves around the canes. When ripe, the berries are very fragile and drop off the bunch if we're not careful. The fresh juice of Gewurztraminer is the best tasting grape juice there is and we often bring some home to enjoy with breakfast. The grapes were whole-cluster pressed at very low pressure to preserve the fresh fruit character. The juice from the two vineyards was blended and cold fermented on an Alsatian yeast called Assmenshausen. This yeast brings out the spicy quality in the taste. When the yeast reduced the natural sugar to about 1%, we stopped fermentation by lowering the temperature to about 30 degrees, then filtered out the yeast to retain the remaining sugar. This slight natural sweetness retains all the wonderful spicy qualities and great fruit flavors that make Gewurztraminer so special. We left the wine unfinned to accentuate the rustic character derived from the old vines.

Tasting Notes: The nose is full and rich with that unmistakable Gewurztraminer character, halfway between grapes and Nasturtium flowers. The taste adds a middle nutty spice that lingers in the finish. There are tastes of cloves and cinnamon, fresh honeydew melon and pears. Flowers are intertwined with all the other flavors. The finish is clean, very slightly sweet and lingering. Gewurztraminer is our favorite wine with spicy foods such as Tai and Southwestern and as an aperitif.

Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemaker:	Robert Rex & Michael Browne
Harvested:	By hand, September 5 & 6, 2001
Brix at Harvest:	24.5° & 23.8
Acid at Harvest	5.8g/L & 6.2g/L
pH	3.55 & 3.40
Pressing:	Whole cluster in a Sutter press
Yeast:	Assemshausen
Fermentation:	Stainless for 60 days until stopped at .5°Brix
Max Fermentation Temp:	50°
Malo/Lactic Conversion:	None
Fining:	unfinned
Filtered:	D.E. to remove yeast, sterile bottled
SO ₂ at Bottling:	20 ppm
Bottled:	157 cases – February 22, 2002
Residual Sugar:	1.1%
Alcohol:	12.5%
Released:	March, 2003
Awards & Reviews:	Not submitted

