



Nick DeRose, Sr. Zinfandel

Cienega Valley

This easy-drinking wine starts with dark berry fragrances that are followed by raspberry and black pepper flavors. All are framed by ripe tannins and soft textures. Finishing long and clean, this medium-to-full bodied wine complements pasta with red sauce or hearty cioppino.

Technical Data

Appellation: Cienega Valley

Varietal content: 100% Zinfandel

Yield: two tons per acre

Finished alcohol: 15.7%

pH: 3.67

Total acid: 6.0g/L

In Tribute to Nick DeRose

A natural born leader, Nick DeRose was the conduit for many family traditions. His father Gene taught him farming practices and sausage making while uncle Al showed him how to cure olives and prosciutto and the art of winemaking. In turn, Nick shared these skills with younger brother Pat, best friend Ernie Miller, and brother-in-law Tony Cedolini. The young quartet formed the nucleus that later established DeRose Vineyards.

Nick was an extremely charismatic "people person" and seemed to know everybody—everywhere. "He never forgot a name or a face," says Tony Cedolini.

Nick was well known for his distinct and booming voice. An accomplished singer, he made "live" radio appearances and sang with the San Jose Light Opera.

After his family acquired the winery in 1988, Nick spent one day each week helping to rejuvenate the abandoned vineyards. "Farming was his peace of mind," says Pat. "We grew up on an orchard and he was getting back to his roots."

"He was a big part of the operation," says nephew Alphonse. "This wine symbolizes our appreciation for his influence and guidance."

Vineyards

Grapes were chosen from four blocks of estate vines. Situated in a particularly cool part of the property, a six-acre block planted in the early 1980s provides most of the fruit and structure. Its vines are trained on bilateral cordons in very sandy soils.

Three blocks of "old vines" support the blend with depth and intensity. These vines were originally planted on their own roots in the late 1890s. Dry farmed on steep terraced hillsides, they grow in an assortment of soils including a rocky mixture created by the San Andreas Fault and a fine sandy-loam.

Cienega Valley is an elevated pocket in the Gabilan Mountains 1,100 feet above sea level. The Gabilan Range is high enough to protect vines from direct contact with the cold coastal air, but low enough to allow breezes to mitigate the heat of summer afternoons. This temperate climate is well suited to producing big, bold Zinfandels.

Fermentation

Zinfandel clusters were destemmed leaving much of the fruit intact. The must was transferred to open-top stainless steel tanks where fermentations began with native yeasts. Temperatures were kept under 88° F. for the 15 to 18 day process. Caps were managed with both pumpovers and punchdowns three or four times daily. Lots were pressed, allowed to undergo secondary fermentation, settled for about two weeks, blended, and finally aged in French oak barrels for 18 months.

