



2004 “*Talmage Bench*” Aldine Vineyard Zinfandel

When we first saw this vineyard in 1997 when we were at Flowers Winery, it had been cropped for years for White Zin, but “Big Daddy” Don Aldine was willing to work with us and find the true potential of this magnificent piece of benchland. Don is not only a vineyard owner and retired veterinarian; he and Jo are parents of Rick Aldine, a great vineyardist in his own right. After working in tandem to institute trellis changes that opened the canopy and reduced yield dramatically, Don has never looked back on the quality road. While an important component of Tandem’s 2004 Peloton blend, a small portion was set aside to be bottled separately. We hope you enjoy this pure expression of Zinfandel as much as we do.

Tasting notes: Fruit riot! Wild berry, brambly mountain fruit and spice. Texture of slippery elm, delicate white pepper and a great mix of red and dark fruits. Enough tannin and acid weight to carry the high-tone fruit well into the long, late palate.

Technical Data:

- Vineyard: Located just North of Talmage and East of Ukiah on the upper benchlands of the Russian River, the Aldine Vineyard experiences moderately hot days and cold, clear nights – perfect Zin weather. Soil is comprised of rocky river deposits and decomposed sandstone and volcanic ash. The vines are St. George rootstock supporting an old-vine clone from the Dry Creek Valley.
- Harvest: 2004 was a warm year for the North Coast of California, and the benchlands along the Russian River were no exception. Dehydration began in some parts of the vineyard rather early but instead of picking, we chose to drop fruit that appeared to have excessive desiccation. We finally got a cold spell and waded into October 9th before picking first the upper block. The lower block, with more struggling vines, held out until October 17th. Rain commenced that morning immediately after picking; sometimes when you roll the dice, you win.
- Fermentation: After additional hand-sorting at the winery, the upper block fruit was lightly crushed and allowed to commence spontaneous fermentation with no cold soak in an open-topped stainless-steel tank. Rather than completely punching down the forming cap of fruit, we went with a mix of pump-over/punch down during fermentation. In a new move for our Zin winemaking, the lower block fruit was destemmed but not crushed (100% whole berry) and added to the already-fermenting upper block fruit. This enabled each berry to be its own fermentation vessel. When the fruit was gently basket-pressed at dryness, the explosion of fruit aromas in the cellar was almost intoxicating!
- Barrel aging: No new oak was used in the aging of this wine. We chose instead to let the voice of the vineyard speak clearly as the wine settled in to its 60% French and 40% Hungarian oak barrels. The wine was racked clean 3 times during 15 months of barrel aging before bottling unfined & unfiltered.
- Bottling: **200 cases** of this intense, age-worthy yet drink-me-now wine were bottled.
 - pH: 3.42
 - TA: 6.5 g/L
 - 15.4% alcohol
 - Residual sugar: 0.05%
 - Appellation: Mendocino County (Talmage Bench)
 - Calif Retail Price: \$32