



2005 *Aldine Vineyard* Zinfandel

We must be pretty comfortable with our Zinfandel-growing partners Don and Jo Aldine. Each year we keep taking liberties with “Big Daddy’s” fruit, pushing the envelope a little further both in the vineyard and the winery. The Aldine Vineyard is not only up to the challenge; it lives for these winemaking adventures! Greg L is now in his 10th year of making wine with the Aldines’ fruit.

Tasting notes: We are seeing a theme with Don’s Zin as one can sum this wine up in one word once again: Fruit riot! Well, OK, one word just won’t do it, but we also have wild berry, brambly mountain fruit & spice with this year adding an echo of black cherry and just a wisp of smoky Lapsang Souchong tea. Texture continues with last year’s theme of slippery elm, delicate white pepper & a great mix of red and dark fruits. Enough tannin and acid weight to carry the high-tone fruit volume well into the long, late palate. The finish is decidedly mocha/cocoa, almost confectionary in its richness.

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 night – 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:** 2005 was a long, cool season with a very wet spring. We had to do a lot of extra handwork to expose the fruit, which suffered excessive shatter due to rain during bloom. The resulting clusters were very open, with tiny berries that had a hard time holding onto their rachii (stems) as the vines started shutting down in the Fall. Leaf-fall was well under way when we picked on October 30th at only 24 Brix, but the juice soaked up to 25.8 or so..... Many berries were literally falling off the stems and the vineyard floor looked like an accident in a marble factory when the picking was done. Viticulture on the very edge!
- **Fermentation:** As with last year 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 dairy tank. Rather than completely punching down the forming cap of fruit, we went with a mix of pump-over/punch down during fermentation. Also as with last year, 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 and decreased the somewhat harder tannins seen in the lower, more heavily virused block. When the fruit was gently basket-pressed at dryness, the explosion of fruit aromas in the cellar was once again 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 casks. The wine was racked clean 4 times during 14 months of barrel aging before bottling unfined & unfiltered.
- **Final bottling technical information of 200 cases of this intense, age-worthy yet drink-me-now wine:**
 - pH: 3.52
 - TA: 6.9 g/L
 - 15.3% alcohol
 - Residual sugar: 0.055%
 - Appellation: Mendocino County (Talmage Bench)
 - Calif Retail Price: \$32 / btl