



Beekeeper Zinfandel, Madrone Springs Vineyard Rockpile Appellation, Sonoma County 2011

Grape: Zinfandel (78% Zinfandel and 22% Petite Sirah)

Vineyard: Madrone Springs Vineyard

Appellation: Rockpile, Sonoma County

Vintage: 2011 Bottled - Feb 2013

Winemaker: Clay Mauritson and Ian Blackburn

Alcohol: 15%

Aged: 15 months in French Oak

Production: 1080 Bottles (90 cases)



Product Info & Orders
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About

The 2011, the steep and rocky high elevation Madrone Spring Vineyard was 13 years old and recovering from a very difficult end of harvest (2010). The heat spike in October 2010 used up much of the vines stored and potential energy; the result was a very thin crop set from the very beginning of 2011. This light crop load progressed slowly and made winegrowers scratch their collective heads. Thankfully, we had the wisdom and leadership of Winemaker Clay Mauritson who let nature take its course and our Madrone Spring Zinfandel was finally picked at the end of October and Petite Sirah came in the first week of November. The 2011 maybe the most nuanced and intelligent wine the team has made yet.

The resulting wine was made from record low yields of less than one ton per acre and truly was a winemaker's vintage. The blended 2011 (78% Zinfandel and 22% Petite Sirah) achieved 15% alcohol as we were gifted with an exceptional crop of Petite Sirah that didn't seem to mind the cooler temperatures and is extraordinary. The purple colored, textural and extremely nuanced 2011 allows for great joy as you explore the nose that showcases the vineyard's innate qualities: a spicy core; underbrush and herbs; stony hillside minerality; significant acidity and lavish dark fruit intensity. A complete wine that has balance, finesse, power, style and gives attention to the long-term nature of the wines of the Rockpile Appellation. I hope this effort continues to convert Cabernet, Meritage, and Rhone fans into accepting Zinfandel as one of the more noble offerings of California. We make this wine with all the attention and quality of the great wines we position ourselves around, and while some may not appreciate the premium effort and costs involved, we are resolved to make great wine that requires some patience and appreciation.

Winemaker Tasting Note: Great wine tells the story of the vintage and complements its natural attributes, showcases vineyard character and winemaking skill, and stays true to varietal character. Beekeeper features exotic spices, dark and intense hillside Zinfandel fruit, and maintains a balance inside its enormous structure that will age for years to come. The color of mixed blacks and ruby garnet gives way to a nose of juicy cherry skins, Asian plum and woody underbrush. The 22% Petite Sirah expands the wine's profile and accentuates the Zinfandel's varietal spice, pepper and red stone fruit core. The rocky hillside vineyard provides firm acidity, layers of textural tannin and innate Rockpile minerality. At the time of release (12.1.2013) the wine had just under a year in bottle and continues to evolve; another year in bottle will surely benefit this special wine and it should continue to improve for 5-7 years. Only 90 cases produced.

Awards



2011 Beekeeper Zinfandel, Madrone Spring Vineyard, Rockpile, Sonoma County

96 points - 3 Puffs Connoisseurs' Guide: 🌟🌟🌟

This is not a wine for the faint of heart nor is it one for those who hold fast to the idea that less is more, but, as in the past, it is certain to thrill devotees of very deep, fully ripened, immensely expressive Zins who believe that generosity is not a vice. It is big but impressively balanced with wisps of briary spice and tempered oak sweetness as adjuncts to its deep and precise themes of pure blackberry fruit, and its combination of suppleness, integrated tannins and enlivening acidity bring it a real measure of crafting rare in big Zinfandels. If already tasty, as the best versions of the variety are wont to be when young, this one unquestionably has very good places to go and can only improve if allowed to sit quietly for another five or even ten years.

Reviewed: January 2014



2011 Beekeeper Zinfandel, Madrone Spring Vineyard, Rockpile, Sonoma County



92 Points The Tasting Panel and The Somm Journal:

Smooth and dense, juicy and concentrated with spice, depth and rich notes of plum and blackberry; lovely and long.