



2015 FTPZ

KIRSCHENMANN RANCH

This wine is composed of 100% ZINFANDEL from Tegan Passalacqua's Kirschenmann Ranch vineyard, planted in 1915 on its own roots, in deep, fine sand deposited by the Mokelumne River, flowing down from the Sierras. The vineyard is on the east side of Lodi in an elbow of the Mokelumne, and its Sierra sand has chased out all loam. The vineyard is so old and healthy that it has

never been replanted, thus the fact the the vines still grow on their own (ungrafted) roots. The shelter of the Mokelumne has a remarkable cooling effect; the vineyard and the area around it are often 10 degrees cooler in Summer and Fall than the rest of Lodi— and is even cooler than much of Napa.

We makes this in a very simple way, determined to catch the straightforward charm but also the strangeness of Zinfandel. The fruit always ripens unevenly— which is part of the charm of working with this grape, especially from older vines.

There was a time when I thought that the right way to make red wine from old-vine zinfandel was to go for power and concentration— as if there was some correlation between vine-age and intensity, concentration. Several of us have learned in the last few years of working in very classical ways with old vines that the wonderful gift of the vines is not concentration, but delicacy and finesse. Quiet power. This wine is a perfect example of that. We all agree that the best way to time the harvest of the fruit it to work WITH it— not against it. For this reason, we do not let the clusters hang and hang until every grape is deep, dark purple. Instead, we pick the vineyard in the middle of general ripeness, preserving the freshness and the verve of the fruit— and securing interesting herbal flavors that interpenetrate the light but complex fruit.

We make this wine in the simplest possible way: we bring the fruit in from the vineyard, introduce it gradually into 600 liter puncheons turned vertical, with their heads removed. We stomp some of the fruit as it goes in, releasing some of the juice. Then we leave it alone. In a week or so, fermentation starts and a cap forms. Still we leave it alone. We call this the Courier Protocol— an extended floating cap fermentation with a minimum of punchdowns and no pumpovers. After about 3 weeks of fermentation, we drained the wine away, pressed the remaining pomace very gently, and aged the free-run separately for about a year, in two 220 liter neutral oak barrels.

The wine usually ages without SO₂ and is bottled with 0 free and about 40 mg/L total.

A note on the name: Tegan helped us get really special fruit from a vineyard farmed by Rich Pato in the San Joaquin Delta for our 2007 Sandlands. In the cellar, we referred to the wine by the code FRP. When we first made wine from Tegan's vineyard, we wanted to accord Tegan the same honor that we gave to Rich, and so we called his wine FTP from the beginning.

TOTAL PRODUCTION:
about 40 cases

