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2019 Grande Vineyard Zinfandel, Napa Valley

Just east of the historic Silverado Trail near the town of Napa, lies an old Zinfandel vineyard that is one of our favorite historic family stories in Napa Valley. Dorothy Rossi and her son, Tony Rossi, take care of an old-vine vineyard that was planted by Dorothy's father, Theodosio Grande, in 1920—the same year that Dorothy was born!

This family tradition is a classic example of what gave birth to the international stature that today's Napa Valley now enjoys. At the turn of the 20th Century, immigrants settled in California's rural valleys to farm fruits and vegetables, livestock, poultry, raise their own food, and grow wine grapes, mostly Zinfandel, (and Petite Sirah) to sell to winemakers and to make their own wine.

Zinfandel was the consensus favorite among wine growers in early California: a hearty producer and highly flavorful grape that was perfectly suited to the healthy soils and sunny climate of California.

Theodosio Rossi was no exception. Having arrived in Napa from Venice, Italy, Theodosio soon planted Zinfandel, pears, prunes, and walnuts. He also built a farmhouse, chicken coop and barn, all of which still exist, as though having been preserved in some sort of agrarian time capsule.

Driving into the Rossi property today is like going back in time to the early days of Napa Valley. Not much has changed. Dorothy and Tony tend daily to the vines, coops and orchard. And every autumn the pickers hand-harvest perfect bunches of Zinfandel into bins. Starting in 2001, all those Zinfandel bunches began to be delivered to the Biale winery, where we cherish the fruits of the labors of Theodosio Grande and his offspring – a genuine and sweet family tradition that daily reminds us of Napa Valley's agricultural origins.

Vintage Notes: A long, warm summer and mild finish to the season. The beginning of the 2019 growing season was defined by copious rainfall and late soil moisture. The long, warm summer saw very few extreme heat events, with foggy mornings setting the stage for vibrant and expressive wines. The long, relatively mild finish to the season, not without its moments of unpredictability, helped to preserve freshness and finesse in the fruit with abundant hang time teasing out great color, structure and soft tannins. Volume is looking to be about average to a little less than average. All in all, exceptional fruit with bright acidity and ample texture promises an amazing vintage.

Harvest Dates: 9/20/19 and 9/27/19

Winemaking: The fruit was hand-sorted first in the field then again at the winery. Gravity fed into open-top fermenters and punched down three times per day. Pressed to Burgundian oak – 24% new. Aged 14 months. Only 401 cases produced.

Alcohol: 14.8%

Winemaker's Tasting Notes: Exploding aromatics of black berry cobbler, pear, blueberries, violets, cocoa, currants, and dried herbs. Fresh entry with a medium body and building tannins. Flavors of strawberry, quince, and spiced cake. Lively acidity makes for a long and juicy finish and assures good aging potential.