



INTENSE RED WINE CLUB



Jake Ryan Zinfandel

Mt Veeder Napa Valley 2006 \$24.99

This label was founded by Jason Bengé and Traci Seville and was named after Jason's two sons, Austin Jake and Colby Ryan. The fruit used in this Zinfandel came from the Bald Mountain Vineyard high up on Mount Veeder at an elevation of 2100 feet. Bald Mountain Vineyard is dry farmed and steeply terraced. Temperatures tend to be cooler than most parts of Napa Valley and the Vineyard is generally clear and sunny when the Valley is blanketed with fog. The 2006 vintage was unique in that it was both the hottest summer for some time but followed by a very mild fall. But he stressed the vines early in the growing season, bringing concentration of flavors, while the mild autumn weather allowed the flavors to fully ripen which created both depth and balance. Made by winemaker Jeff Fontanella, who earned his experience making wine at Opus One, Saddleback Cellars, Carter Cellars, and Venge Vineyards. This is a full bodied and very concentrated and extracted Zinfandel. Bright flavors of red fruits such as cherry, raspberry, and rhubarb get the palate humming, followed by black pepper, baking spice, clove, and vanilla. The finish is long and extended with hints of caramel and blackberry preserves. This is my favorite Zinfandel in the store at this time. Serve this delicious Zinfandel with a hearty autumn meal such as pot roast or beef stew.

Esca Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley 2006 \$21.99

This label was developed by Mario Monticelli and his wife Anna. Mario is the brother of Massimo, the Wine Garage winemaker. Mario and Anna met while studying viticulture at UC Davis and started off in the business as Philippe Melka's assistants. Mario went on to be the head winemaker for Quixote Winery and Anna was the assistant winemaker at Bryant Family Vineyard's and later became the head winemaker at Piña Cellars. Mario is currently the head winemaker at the new Trinchero Winery, making only single vineyard designate Cabernets. Esca is the Italian word for "allurement", and just how the hibiscus flower attracts a bee on the label of this bottle, Mario and Anna believe that great wine should attract good food, conversation, and the good life. This Cabernet with source from many different Vineyards in Napa Valley, both from the mountains and the valley floor. This wine is composed of 89% Cabernet, 8% Merlot, and 3% Petit Verdot. This is a dark and brooding wine. Extremely concentrated and extracted, this wine is a perfect Cabernet selection for the Intense Red Club. Almost chewy on the palate and black in the glass, I get aromas of blackberry preserves, Cedar, and saddle leather. On the palate more black fruit flavors such as plums, currants, chocolate, espresso bean, and tobacco are detected. The finish is accentuated by more fruit flavors with a rich and lush mouth feel, and a smooth integrated tannic finish. This wine screams to be paired with hearty Italian dishes. Try it with spaghetti and meatballs.

Balletto Syrah

Russian River Valley 2005 \$19.99

John Balletto started farming zucchini near Sebastopol at the age of 17 on his family's ranch. A football star in High School and later in college, his career ended when his father died and he took over the family vegetable business. Too competitive to make money to support the family selling zucchini, John started planting wine grapes and now he farms 250 acres in prime Russian River real estate. He sells fruit to many wineries but in 2001 started to make wine under his own label. Syrah, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, and Zinfandel are his thing and he was getting awards all over the place on the wines, including several best of class ribbons at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair -- THE main tasting event in the County. This yummy Syrah comes from the BCD Vineyard about 2 miles north of the winery near the Russian River. The winemaker is Dan Cederquist. This is a full bodied wine with beautiful dark purple color. Richly textured and incredibly soft on the palate with a velvety mouth feel. This Syrah shows more fruit than meat. Round and lush, on first sip, I think of chocolate covered cherries and cola. Raspberry jam, blueberries, and plums dominate the palate. This is a very easy drinking wine with very soft tannins, and before you know it your glass is empty and you reaching for the bottle for another glass. Serve this wine with pork roast, or pork tenderloin stuffed with figs and grilled over charcoal.

Twisted Rivers Petite Sirah

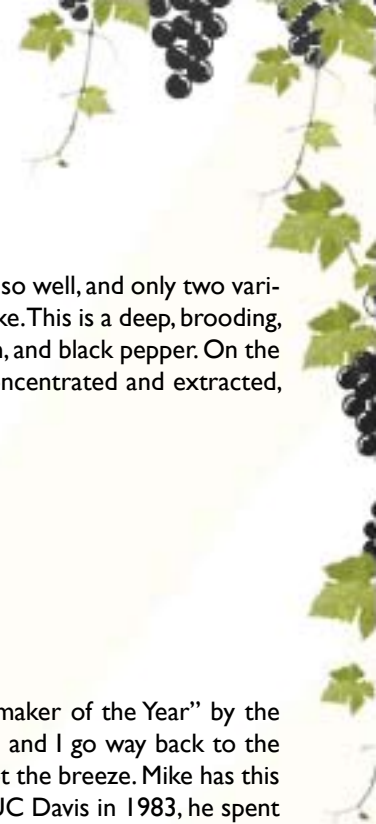
Clarksburg 2008 \$21.99

This wine comes from Duke Heringer, a man who stands about 5 foot six, but with an over-the-top personality that carries an extra large name. I once asked what his real first name was when he replied "Duke, it's on my birth certificate". His father named him after his favorite baseball star, Duke Snider. The Heringer Family has been farming in the Clarksburg Delta for more than 140 years. The fourth son born to Lester and Marjorie Heringer, and fifth generation farmer, Duke Heringer, was raised in the small fertile river delta community of Clarksburg, CA.

Duke returned to the family farming operation in 1977 after graduating from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, emphasizing in Ag Business Management and Crop Science. He carries a strong reputation in the community for his high energy, personable demeanor, affluent taste and tireless efforts to improve the quality of Heringer Holland Land and Farming Co. and Duke H. Wine Company. The family started growing wine grapes back in the 1970's and has sold wine grapes through the decades to many of the great wineries in California and throughout the country. The family vineyards are now located at their Home Ranch on Netherlands Road in Clarksburg. A 220 acre parcel of beautiful, sandy loam soil bordered on the east by Elk Slough, a tributary of the Sacramento River. Clarksburg has a very unique microclimate that lends itself to growing amazing Petite Sirah and Chenin Blanc.

Continued On The Next Page...

INTENSE RED WINE CLUB



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And that truly is it. I have never discovered any growing region in California that only produces two varietals so well, and only two varietals. This wine is made by my good friend, Gary Branham, and Gary was the dude who introduced me to Duke. This is a deep, brooding, masculine wine. So dark that it stains the inside of the wine glass. The nose throws off minerals, blueberry jam, and black pepper. On the palate, I get more blueberries, white and black peppercorns, huckleberries, and roasted meat. Extremely concentrated and extracted, this is one brawny wine made by a dude named Duke. 'Nough said. Served with roasted cow.

Dark Horse Zinfandel

Dry Creek Valley 2007 \$24.99

Dark Horse Cabernet Sauvignon

Dry Creek Valley 2007 \$24.99

The winemaker is none other than the famous Michael Loykasek, who was named in 2007 as the "Winemaker of the Year" by the Sonoma County Harvest Fair, when he won the prestigious "Best of Show" for his 2005 Zinfandel. Michael and I go way back to the early days of the Garage when he used to stop by and we would throw back a glass or two of wine and shoot the breeze. Mike has this cowboy thing going on and I've never seen him do not wear cowboy boots or drive a truck. A graduate of UC Davis in 1983, he spent the first five years of his winemaking career down in Paso Robles way, then he moseyed on yonder up to Sonoma County where he was the head winemaker of Meeker Vineyards in Dry Creek Valley. Seven years later he moved on over to Armida Winery where he became famous for his "PoiZin" Zinfandels. It was when he was making wine at Armida he decided to start his own label, Dark Horse. Mike also makes wine for De La Montanya winery and Hauck Cellars. One day when Mike was driving past a store he stopped in and while over a glass or two of wine I convinced him that some of my very favorite wines in the store were these crazy blends. We started pulling corks on several different varietals and started making our own blends at the tasting bar. The result of that fateful Sunday afternoon of wine drinking is his very popular "Gun Fighter" label which is a blend of Zinfandel and Syrah. This Cabernet is very fruit forward with sugared plums, blueberry, and spice on the nose. Dusty bramble, cassis, tobacco, and plum entice the palate. Soft tannin and smooth finish. The Zinfandel is classic Dry Creek spice. Deep, bold flavors of chocolate, berry, pepper, and allspice pop in the mouth. The finish is punctuated by firm tannin with more dusty spices coating the tongue. As Mike states on his web site, serve these wines with MEAT.