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SONOMA COUNTY

Inspiration Vineyards

Inspiration is a small producer of quite desirable wines. The only problem is that there is not more available. Fortunately, the winery will ship. So if you can't find the wines locally, contact the winery: www.inspirationvineyards.com.

The **2007 Viognier**, Russian River Valley, \$29, 100 cases, was made entirely in stainless steel. It opens with barnyard, pear, mineral, and grapefruit peel. Big, intense, zippy flavors of the same plus green peach finish long and broad. Unusual, well balanced, structured, and integrated. Very Tasty. The **2006 Chardonnay**, Russian River Valley, \$22, 170 cases, was fermented and aged for ten months in two and three-year-old French oak. Apple, pear, a veggie note and smoky oak on the nose lead to flavors of apple, lemon peel, and smoky oak. The finish is medium-long and medium-broad.

The **2005 Cabernet Sauvignon**, Dry Creek Valley, \$30, 170 cases, spent twenty-two months in French oak and opens with attractive, big, rich, forward blackberry, smoke, vanilla, cherry, blueberry, oak, and a hint of dark chocolate. All repeat as flavors touched with light, very smooth, fine tannin and soft acidity before a long, medium-broad finish. Well balanced, structured, and integrated, it is drinking well now. Good.

The **2006 Zinfandel**, Alexander Valley, \$23, 123 cases, was aged for ten months in American oak, 33% new, and older French oak. It is very ripe with aromas of cooked dark fruit, mostly cherry and blackberry, plus oak repeat with the addition of leather, light, dry tannin, and a bitter note from the oak. It finishes long and medium-broad. Well balanced, structured, and integrated. The **2007 Zinfandel**, Alexander Valley, \$23, 190 cases, was handled in the same way but, while quite ripe, is different. It opens with sweet smoke, dark cherry, blackberry, black raspberry, currant, and oak. All repeat as flavors which are juicy by not sweet and are laced with nice acidity and tannin before a broad, long finish. Well integrated, structured, and balanced. Good.

Inspiration also makes Zinfandel from its small estate vineyard which was planted in 1897. The **2007 Zinfandel, Old Vine, Estate**, \$30, 50 cases, has a nose of smoke, eucalyptus, raspberry, cherry, red currant, and cranberry jelly. All continue as flavors accented with nice sweetness, juicy acidity, and very fine, smooth tannin and carry through the long, medium-broad finish. Well structured, balanced, and integrated. Very Good. **BEST WINE.**

The **2006 Syrah**, Dry Creek Valley, \$29, 70 cases, is 97% syrah co-fermented with 3% viognier. A dark nose of cherry, raspberry, plum, vanilla, tea, leather, chocolate, and smoky oak continues onto the palate which adds very nice acidity and fine tannin. The finish is medium-broad and truncated. Easily drinkable now, it needs another two to three years to develop and be at its best. Well balanced, structured, and integrated. Tasty.