

## Armida Winery

### 2010 Late Harvest Zinfandel

#### Aged 10 Years in Barrel

**Alcohol: 17.9% Residual Sugar: 62 g/L**

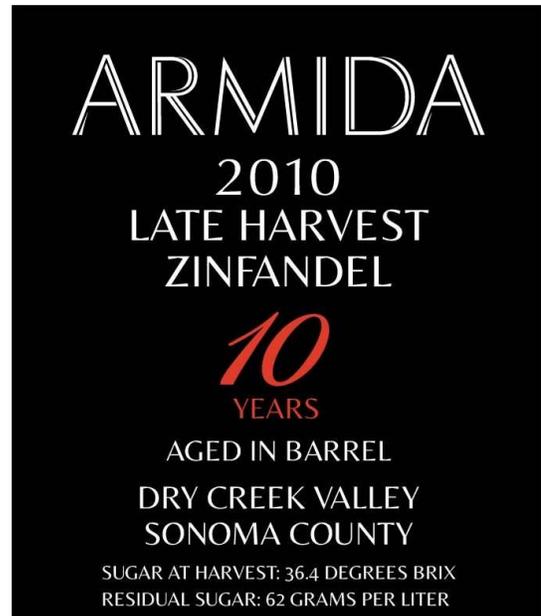
In June of 2010 I arrived at Armida Winery. There was definitely a “catch-up” period including days of bottling, and harvest only a few months away. The harvest plan was already set for what grapes and how much of them we would be harvesting that year. Being the “new guy” I wasn’t about to start suggesting changes to the plan, yet I felt like I needed to make something different. I mustered up the courage and asked Bruce if we could make a small amount of dessert wine for the 2010 harvest. Bruce pondered and gave me the go-ahead.

I love Port. I especially love how long Ports can age. My first bottle of wine that I spent more than \$100 on was a 2003 Vintage Port. When opened on my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday this port will be nearly 30 years old! I had made “Port” or fortified wine before at Peachy Canyon Winery and Dutton Goldfield Winery, so it seemed natural to continue the tradition here at Armida. I reached out to one of our Zinfandel growers in the Dry Creek Valley and he agreed to leave one acre of Zinfandel unpicked until I deemed it ready for dessert wine. Thank goodness that the grower was patient with me, because we didn’t end up picking the grapes until November 17<sup>th</sup>.

When the grapes were picked and delivered my coworkers looked at me curiously when they saw them. Most of the grapes had raisined, much of it attacked by the “noble-rot” botrytis. Usually these grapes are considered flawed and are hand sorted out before they’re crushed. Yet for making a dessert wine these were perfect! Ugly, but perfect for what I had in mind. We crushed the fruit and when analyzed the sugar concentration was at 36%, almost double normal. The wine fermented for two weeks before we pressed the wine from the small amount of skins and seeds.

Due to the high level of sugar this fermentation was never going to finish. The yeast ultimately creates too much alcohol, a toxic environment for yeast. The wine stopped fermenting with about 6% sugar remaining and 16% alcohol. To make a fortified dessert wine, you add high-proof spirits to insure fermentation truly stops, and the additional alcohol also intensifies the flavors and builds a wine that can be aged for decades. I traded with a friend - some wine for high-proof distilled brandy. I added enough of the 70% alcohol high proof to get the wine over 18% alcohol, transferring the wine to a barrel and ending up with only 45 gallons of dessert wine.

We tasted the dessert wine in early 2011 and we knew that we had a stunning, unique wine. I recognized the wine needed at least a year of aging, and was keen to see if it could age longer. In the following years, we didn’t get fruit from that Zinfandel vineyard again and with it the “Port Project” was disremembered, but not to me. I would hide the barrel of 2010 Port in the back corner of the barrel room, hoping that this wine would be forgotten about until the time was right. By 2015, the existence



of the wine was only known to myself. I made the decision then that I would age this Port for a full 10 YEARS in barrel before bottling.

In January 2021, the 45 gallons of Late Harvest Zinfandel was hand bottled into 36 cases of 375mL bottles.

Please enjoy this Late Harvest Zinfandel as much as I enjoyed making it.

Cheers,

Winemaker Brandon Lapidis