



DEUX AMIS
Two Friends, One Dream

Phyllis and Jim take a hands-on approach to produce small lots of well-balanced, delicious wines.

Relaxing after work over a glass of wine, Phyllis Zouzounis and Jim Penpraze discussed their dream and planted the seed that would grow into Deux Amis. The two friends, co-workers at a Dry Creek Valley winery, had spent years making wine for someone else. Yet they dreamed of starting their own winery, producing handmade wines that reflected the essence of Sonoma County.

The seed grew slowly and their dream took shape. Phyllis and Jim began producing small lots of homemade wines for their friends and family. Then, in 1987, they seized a rare opportunity to purchase some wonderful Zinfandel grapes from one of the valley's premier producers. That vintage marked the birth of Deux Amis. Although they kept their day jobs, Phyllis and Jim made plans to grow their newborn winery. Today they produce 1500 cases of superb wines that truly capture a sense of place in every bottle.

The Wines

Deux Amis produces four Zinfandels and a Petite Sirah. Each wine exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the microclimate and soils where the grapes are grown.

The **Sonoma County Zinfandel** is a blend of Zinfandel from vineyards in Dry Creek Valley and Petite Sirah and Zinfandel from Alexander Valley. With ripe raspberry aromas and a dash of black pepper, the Sonoma County blend creates the ideal character that Zin lovers crave. Wonderfully rich and velvety smooth flavors of fully ripened raspberries and a dusting of high-grade white and black pepper make for a full, robust wine. Annual production of the Sonoma County Zinfandel is around 1000 cases.

Deux Amis' **Halling Vineyard Zinfandel**, **Rued Vineyards Zinfandel** and **Shadick Vineyard Zinfandel** are all single-vineyard designate, limited production wines—between 100–150 cases each—from Dry Creek Valley. The **Halling Vineyard Zinfandel** displays intense, rich and layered aromas and flavors that explode on your palate. Jammy blackberry and juicy black raspberry fruit mingle with traces of creamy cocoa, vanillin oak and caramel to create a luscious wine.



Jim Penpraze and Phyllis Zouzounis fulfilled their dream of producing excellent wines from grapes grown in Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys.

The **Rued Vineyards Zinfandel** is a classic Zin with aromas and flavors of rich berries, plum and spicy black pepper within a focused structure of well-balanced tannins and acids. This wine is a perfect candidate for your cellar.

The **Shadick Vineyard Zinfandel** offers seductive aromas and flavors of raspberries, candied cherries, vanilla and spice, balanced with tannins and oak to create a delicious, full-bodied wine.

The **Vyborny Vineyards Petite Sirah** is also a single-vineyard designate wine from Alexander Valley. This Petite is known for its rich, concentrated flavors of blackberries and cassis along with smooth tannins that burst on your palate. A long, silky finish completes this intensely bold yet elegant wine. This amazing Petite disappears all too quickly with about 150 cases produced annually.

Winemaking Philosophy

"Our first task was to find the finest producers of Zinfandel and Petite Sirah," says Phyllis. "We knew that Dry Creek Valley was the best location to look for Zinfandel grapes. But we had trouble finding a Petite Sirah vineyard that fit our needs. Then we discovered a grower in Alexander Valley who produced exceptional Zinfandel and was willing to plant some Petite Sirah just for us." Establishing solid relationships with veteran grape growers in Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys helped Phyllis and Jim secure an annual premium-quality grape supply for Deux Amis. Those relationships establish the foundation of Deux Amis Wines.



Harvest is a busy time at Deux Amis. On this crisp fall morning, Phyllis and Jim work quickly to move grapes into the winery.

"Once the grapes are in our hands, we allow them to create the wine," says Phyllis. "We act as caretakers—we make sure the winemaking process allows the unique characteristics of the grapes to shine forth. The rest is left up to what Mother Nature graciously provides us."

The winemaking process at Deux Amis starts the moment the grapes are picked during the cool harvest mornings and quickly delivered to the winery in small half-ton bins. As each bin is very slowly dumped into the crusher/de-stemmer, the grapes are visually inspected and any bunches not meeting Deux Amis' quality standards are removed. The grapes that pass inspection fall into the crusher/de-stemmer and the resulting must is transferred to open-topped stainless-steel fermenters.

Gently punching down the cap of the fermenting juice by hand three to four times each day permits the maximum extraction of flavors and color without extracting excess tannins and the bitterness that tannins produce. After fermentation is completed, the wine is drained into tanks. The skins are placed in buckets and hand-carried to the horizontal basket press, which gently removes the remaining wine.

The wines are kept separate by varietal and vineyard through the crushing, fermentation and the first months of barrel aging. Between six and eight months after placing the wine into barrels, Phyllis and Jim taste each barrel of wine and start making blending decisions. Any barrel of wine that does not meet the winery's standards does not make it into a bottle of Deux Amis wine.

Phyllis and Jim, firmly committed to produce the best possible wines, continue their highly labor intensive hands-on approach to winemaking, careful not to alter the wonderful fruit Mother Nature and their growers provided to them. The result is well-balanced wines with delicious fruit flavors and excellent color.

Vineyards

Phyllis and Jim stay in close communication with their growers throughout the growing season. During harvest Deux Amis receives perfectly ripened fruit in the crisp morning hours.

"Having a handshake agreement with our growers may seem foreign to some wineries, but it has served us well," says Jim. "The relationship with our growers is built on mutual trust and respect. We trust them to deliver the best grapes possible, and they respect our winemaking and are proud to see their name on the label of our vineyard-designated wines. We couldn't ask for a better relationship."

Halling Vineyard

Gary and Susan Halling's hillside vineyard is located in northern Dry Creek Valley off West Dry Creek Road. Their two-acre head-pruned Zinfandel vineyard was planted with Hambrecht clone cuttings from the 100-year-old Grist Vineyard on Bradford Mountain. The Hambrecht clone, noted for its low yields and intensely flavored grapes, has proven to be the perfect selection for the Halling's vineyard and for Deux Amis' Zin family.

Rued Vineyards

Richard and Dee Rued have a wonderful vineyard on the benchland of Dry Creek Valley, just north of Deux Amis. Converting the family farm from pastureland, prunes and a few lesser-known varieties of grapes, in 1970 Richard followed his instincts and planted Zinfandel. He was able to obtain Zinfandel bud wood from the Mazzoni family, local growers renowned for their vibrant Zin grapes.

Richard's instincts have proven him right. The fruit from Rued Vineyards creates an intensely rich and concentrated Zinfandel. Each year, Jim and Phyllis keep several barrels separate to create the Rued Vineyards Zinfandel. The remaining Rued Zin becomes part of the Sonoma County blend.

Shadick Vineyard (formerly Belle Canyon Vineyards)

Tom and Patti Shadick's vineyard is perched on a ridge crest in the northern end of Dry Creek Valley. This ridge separates Dry Creek Valley from Alexander Valley. The grapes from this vineyard express varietal characteristics found in both valleys. The vine orientation and slope of the hill allows the fruit to receive ideal sun exposure, providing nearly perfect conditions for even ripening. Thinner red clay soil naturally controls vine vigor and canopy growth, admitting more nutrients, and thus more flavor, into each grape.

Vyborny Vineyards

The rolling terraced hillside of Alex Vyborny's vineyard is a perfect location to grow Petite Sirah and Zinfandel in Alexander Valley. With a southwesterly exposure, gravelly loam soil and naturally low production due to the soil depth and excellent drainage, this vineyard produces incredibly intense and rich fruit, year after year.

Zinfandel and a small portion of the Petite Sirah from Vyborny goes into the Sonoma County blend. The balance of the Petite Sirah is given additional barrel aging and then bottled separately.

