



## **FRATELLI PERATA 1996 ZINFANDEL**

Through hundreds of years of change in Italy, the Sangiovese grape has evolved hundreds of different clones. Fratelli Perata selected five of these clones in a test planting. The acreage was then planted primarily to the Brunello clone. This classic, premier clone is the basis for the fine Brunello di Montepulciano. This is the style of wine Fratelli Perata produces from our Sangiovese grapes.

In Paso Robles, California, just 25 miles from the Pacific Coast, the vineyards of Fratelli Perata are located. The rolling hills and warm growing season are optimal conditions for producing superior grapes.

The fruit in the vineyard is grown with flavor in mind. The vines are severely pruned to limit production. The crop is thinned approximately 25% to concentrate the flavors. It is among the very last grapes harvested to allow it a long hang time.

The 1995 growing season was hugely rainy and cool early on. The vines produced very large berries, resulting in less intense color than usually found here. Interestingly, the aromas from the freshly crushed Sangiovese were still pronounced during crush, filling the winery. The vines were harvested October 28, 1995, with a Brix of 23.0 and a pH of 3.3. With a large crop this vintage, the grapes were culled going into the crusher. They were fermented for nine days in open vats, 1 1/2 ton lots. The caps on these are consistently punched down by hand four times a day during primary fermentation. The wine was softly pressed and transferred into neutral barrels to finish fermentation and for aging.

Typical of Italian wines, this wine has a natural acidity for aging potential, and to complement food. We gave the 1995 twenty months of barrel aging before being bottled in August of 1997. Additional bottle aging allowed the wine to develop the complex flavors the variety is noted for: violets and strawberry with an underlying current of cedar.