Ridge Vineyards

A masterful field blend from century-old vines, this Zinfandel captures Sonoma Valley's history with layers of dark fruit, spice, and remarkable freshness, promising elegance and longevity.

RIDGE VINEYARDS

98 JEB DUNNUCK

Pagani Ranch Zinfandel 2023

California, USA

Region and Vineyards

Pagani Ranch lies on the western side of Sonoma Valley, in Sonoma County, at an elevation of 30 to 45 meters. The soils here are gravelly clay loams, lending both structure and freshness to the wines. The site is particularly cool for the variety, often the last to be harvested, though in 2022, early ripening led to picking between 13 and 17 September.

The vineyard itself is a living monument: thirty acres were planted between 1896 and 1922, primarily to Zinfandel interplanted with petite sirah, carignane, and alicante bouschet. Six acres were replanted in 2013 with zinfandel and petite sirah. These head -trained vines, with yields averaging 3 tons per acre, produce grapes of remarkable concentration and complexity. The younger vines contribute fruit-driven vibrancy, while the venerable old vines offer depth, texture, and distinctive spice.

Winemaking

The 2022 vintage is a **field blend of 82% Zinfandel, 9% Alicante Bouschet, 5% Petite Sirah, and 4% Mataro (Mourvèdre)**. Grapes were hand-harvested, destemmed, and crushed before undergoing natural primary and malolactic fermentations, with pump-overs of a floating cap.

Aged for 14 months in 100% air-dried American oak barrels, the wine saw 15% new oak, with the balance divided among one-to-three-year-old and neutral barrels. This careful regime ensures structure without overshadowing fruit expression. Bottled in February 2024, the wine carries **14.4% alcohol**, a **pH of 3.51**, and a **total acidity of 7.65 g/L**, highlighting Ridge's philosophy of minimal intervention and terroir-driven authenticity.

Alcohol :14,40 %

Composition: 82% Zinfandel, 9% Alicante Bouschet, 5% Petite Syrah, 4% Mataro

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep ruby with youthful purple reflections.
- **Aroma:** Expressive nose of blackberry compote, black cherry, and wild plum, supported by hints of star anise, violets, and cocoa, with a subtle oak-derived vanilla lift.
- **Palate:** Concentrated and layered, showing ripe bramble fruit, mulberry, and licorice, framed by firm yet polished tannins. A vibrant acidity drives freshness, while savory undertones of spice and earth add complexity. The finish is long, balanced, and elegantly structured.

Did you know?

The Pagani family has farmed this vineyard for **four generations**, preserving vines that survived both Prohibition and the Depression—periods during which most vineyards were abandoned. Its survival testifies to the exceptional quality of this site and the family's commitment to its heritage.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Grilled lamb chops** with rosemary and garlic: the wine's spice and acidity cut through the richness of the meat.
- **Slow-cooked beef short ribs**: the depth and tannic backbone harmonize with the dish's savory intensity.
- **Wild mushroom risotto**: earthy flavors complement the wine's dark fruit and subtle herbal notes.
- **Aged Manchego cheese**: the nutty, firm character enhances the wine's structure and lingering finish.

98 JEB DUNNUCK

Jeb Dunnuck (JD) : 98 Points (2023)

The 2023 Zinfandel Pagani Ranch is from a simply gorgeous and truly historic site, made in an elegant, medium-bodied style and blending 79% Zinfandel, 10% Alicante Bouschet, 9% Petite Sirah and 2% Mataro, fermented separately until the final blend. Citrus, orange peel, and honeycomb highlight a complex framework of Old World dustiness and savory delight. Juicy red fruit, light spice, and a gorgeously silky texture continue the theme. This is one to age another 10-15 years.

95 Wine Spectator

Wine Spectator (WS) : 95 Points (2023)

A dynamic Zin that's both potent and polished. Flavors of blackberry, dark chocolate, licorice and fruitcake spices build richness and tension toward broad-shouldered tannins. Drink now through 2035.

RIDGE
VINEYARDS

Pagani Ranch Zinfandel 2023

Robert Parker (RP) : 94 Points (2022)

The 2022 Zinfandel Pagani Ranch is a blend of 82% Zinfandel, 9% Alicante Bouschet, 5% Petite Sirah and 4% Mataro. It has layered scents of blueberry preserves, yellow peach, toasted coconut and floral perfume. The palate combines generous, layered, fragrant flavors with silky tannins and bursts of mouthwatering acidity, and it has a long, expressive finish. (EB)

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