

PLATINUM SERIES

Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

Who among us has ever dreamed of getting away from it all? Maybe moving to the country — no crowds, no traffic, no commuting, no boss. You may have even pictured yourself owning a small bed & breakfast, raising a few thoroughbred horses perhaps. And while you're at it, why not dream of starting a small winery and producing your own award-winning Zinfandel? Just a dream, right? Well, at Napa Valley's RustRidge Ranch, husband-and-wife-team, Jim Fresquez and Susan Meyer have figured out how to turn that dream into reality.

RustRidge Ranch & Winery lies within the picturesque and historic Chiles Valley. Most of the property's 442 acres is comprised of gently rolling hills where thoroughbred racehorses idly graze when not in training. Nearby is the RustRidge vineyard, a 55-acre block of land planted in the early 1970s. And at the heart of it all is the Ranch's quaint, 5-room Bed & Breakfast with sweeping views of the vineyards, pastures, hillsides and ancient oak trees.

The RustRidge property was once part of the 10,000 acre Catacoula Ranch, a huge Mexican land grant awarded to Col. Joseph Chiles by General Vallejo in the mid-1800s. Over the years, the land has been divided and subdivided into many separate parcels.

The property that is now RustRidge Ranch was purchased in 1933 by the Harris family, who used the land to raise dairy cows and to grow wheat and barley. They sold the farm in 1955 to horse enthusiasts, Del Weaver and Nancy Wood, who in turn, developed it into a world-class racehorse training ground. It was they who dubbed the ranch RustRidge, named after a prominent ridge on the property that illuminated a brilliant rust color during certain times of the year.

In 1970, the racehorse operation caught the eye of Lucille Meyer, a successful San Francisco real estate agent, and thoroughbred racehorse owner. She convinced Weaver and Wood to sell her the property and then promptly set up her own horse training facility at RustRidge.

This period of time was also the early stages of the big California wine boom. Napa Valley in particular was starting to experience unprecedented growth in vineyard land and start-up wineries.

One of Lucille's sons, Stan, took the lead and enrolled in U.C. Davis's enology program. By 1973, he and his brother Grant began planting 55-acres of vineyard. For nearly a decade, the two brothers sold their grapes to dozens of start-up and established wineries.

In 1985 Stan and Grant Meyer decided to hold back a portion of their harvest to create their own wines under the RustRidge label. What started as a few-hundred-case-experiment turned quickly into a full-fledged 8,000 case operation. Unfortunately, the two siblings started to lose interest. Over the next half-dozen years, the brothers virtually became absentee owners. As a result, the condition of the vineyard rapidly deteriorated, as did the production and quality of the wines.

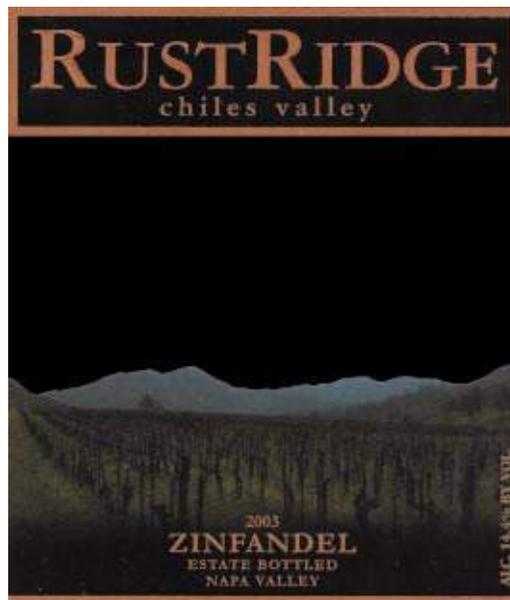
The ranch took another milestone turn in 1990, when their sister, Susan agreed to take control of RustRidge. "The first order of business was to begin generating cash flow again," recalls Susan. Because of her brothers' lagging interest over the years, Susan was faced with an escalating inventory problem. "Not knowing the wine industry, Jim and I had to figure out how to sell literally years' worth of inventory," she says. In addition, they moved into a smaller house across the street and converted the main house

into a cozy, five-room Bed & Breakfast.

"In the vineyard, we had too much Riesling so we started grafting over to more Cabernet and Chardonnay," she says. And lastly, with Jim's extensive background as a horse trainer, the racehorse-side of the equation was quickly resurrected. Once again they were running on all cylinders.

The vineyard is the backbone of the RustRidge Ranch now. The main focus is on improving the quality of grapes and refining the quality of their own wines. To that end, well-known winery owner and friend, Kent Rosenblum agreed early on to consult with the winemaking.

Since Susan and Jim took control of RustRidge, their efforts are paying off. The horse breeding and training facility is flourishing, the Bed & Breakfast is consistently busy, and their wines are winning top medals at the major wine competitions.





TASTING NOTES

TASTING NOTES



523 Cases Produced

The 2003 RustRidge Estate Zinfandel from the famed Chiles Valley region in Napa Valley is solidly structured. As the wine opens, the tannins become silkier, the viscosity of the wine increases, and the fruitiness evolves fully on the palette. The 2003 Zinfandel shined at the *California State Fair Wine Competition* by winning a **Gold Medal — Best of Class**. In the *Connoisseurs' Guide*, the empowered Zinfandel received **93 Points**, — “Attractive elements of vanillin oak and a full measure of well-ripened blackberries meld seamlessly in both the concentrated aromas and impressively extracted flavors of this very deep and flavorful wine. For all of its considerable substance and stuffing, this Zinfandel is very much a table wine in style, and its long line of rich fruit makes moot a slight bit of finishing heat. While it may be enjoyed in the near term, it has the clear capacity to get better for three to five years.” The wine pairs brilliantly with a broad range of entrees: from pizza to gourmet masterpieces. Aged 22 months in oak. 100% Zinfandel. Enjoy now until 2014.



Dear *Platinum Series* Member,

We are pleased to share our 2003 estate bottled Zinfandel with you. The 2003 Zinfandel is from 30 year old vines with the original 8 x 12 spacing in a six acre block alongside the winery. These vines are cordon pruned on a vertical trellis.

This wine is in the claret style and is characteristic of Chiles Valley Zinfandel with spice and flavors of blackberry, raspberry and cherry.

The 2003 harvest season was a grower's dream. The weather was consistently warm, which allowed our grapes to ripen evenly. The wine is complex and sophisticated and will age gracefully over the next few years.

Come tour our ranch and winery, located on 442 acres on the eastern backroads of Napa Valley. We are open daily for tasting and picnicking. We also have a Bed & Breakfast Inn on our property where you can enjoy the wine country lifestyle in a peaceful and natural setting.

Salute!

Susan & Jim Fresquez

2910 Lower Chiles Valley Road • St. Helena, California 94574
Winery/Bed & Breakfast: (707) 965-9353 • (800) 788-0263 • Fax (707) 965-9263



REORDERS

The 2003 RustRidge Zinfandel is a unique marriage of the bold and the elegant, a vivid fruit forward wine that explodes with dignity and finesse. This is a rare wine; grab your one or two cases out of the 523 produced, before it's too late!

The **RustRidge 2003 Zinfandel Chiles Valley Napa Valley** retails at the winery for \$30.00 per bottle. As a *Platinum Series* member your very special pricing is as follows:

Half-Case-\$25.00 /bottle (\$150.00)
Full-Case-\$22.00 /bottle (\$264.00)
[Plus shipping]

Call: 1-800-266-8888
Fax: 1-800-266-8889
E-mail: orders@goldmedalwine.com

Reorder Web Site:
www.goldmedalwine.com/member