

RIDGE VINEYARDS

17100 Monte Bello Road, P.O. Box A-1

Cupertino, California 95015

(408) 867-3233

Director
Department of the Treasury
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Washington, D.C. 20226

August 24, 1982

Dear Sir,

We have been purchasing Zinfandel grapes from the Fiddletown vineyard of Chester Eschen since the vintage of 1974.

We consider these grapes to be of excellent quality and clearly distinct in character from the Zinfandel we purchase in the neighboring "Shenandoah Valley of California".

Fiddletown is a very old grape growing area and we would highly recommend that it be granted an appellation.

I am enclosing several of the labels of the wine we have made from the area over the years.

Sincerely,


Paul Draper

Winemaker
Ridge Vineyards



74 Zinfandel, Fiddletown, bottled March 1976

In 1974, for the first time, we made Zinfandels from a number of old, non-irrigated vineyards in the Sierra foothills. This one came from Fiddletown, the old gold mining camp made famous by Bret Harte. The wine is big, with the varietal fruit typical of the region, complemented by the oak of small-cooperage aging. It should be enjoyable to try this summer, but will need several years to approach full potential.

PD (1/76)

RIDGE wine is made with an emphasis on quality and naturalness that is rarely attempted. Our grapes are grown in select vineyards (usually identified on the label), where they are left to ripen to peak maturity, often at some loss of quantity. We let the wine settle and age in small barrels, with only rare cellar treatment other than racking. Varieties are not blended unless so indicated on the label. Near Black Mountain on Monte Bello Ridge, our main vineyard is 10 miles south of Palo Alto, 15 miles inland from the ocean, and over 2000 feet in elevation. For requesting information on ordering wines or visiting the winery for tasting, please send us a note or call (408) 867-3233.

DRB (1967)

**RIDGE
CALIFORNIA
ZINFANDEL
FIDDLETOWN
1974**

MOUNTAIN GROWN GRAPES, AMADOR COUNTY
BOTTLED MAR 1976 ALCOHOL 14.5% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA



80 Zinfandel, Fiddletown, bottled April 1982

In the fine 1980 vintage we used only the grapes from the higher slopes of this old hill vineyard to make the Fiddletown and put those from the lower slopes in our softer Amador. This wine shows more of the regional fruit than have past vintages and is somewhat less tannic. It should improve with two or three years in bottle although it seems soft enough for tasting this fall.

PD (3/82)

Begun in 1959, Ridge was one of the first of today's chateau-size California wineries, that is, those that attempt only the highest quality at the quantity levels of the classified chateaux (up to 40,000 cases). All the wines are aged in small oak cooperage with the majority receiving no cellar treatment other than racking. Located above 2300 feet on Monte Bello Ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains, our winery and main vineyards overlook San Francisco Bay. For information on ordering wines or visiting us for tasting, please send a note or call (408) 867-3233.

DRB (1/80)

**RIDGE
CALIFORNIA
ZINFANDEL
FIDDLETOWN
1980**

ESCHEN VINEYARD, 95% ZINFANDEL, 5% PETITE SIRAH
FOOTHILLS AMADOR COUNTY ALCOHOL 13.7% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, BOX AI, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA

PRODUCT OF CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

NET CONTENTS
750ML



79 Zinfandel, Fiddletown, bottled April 1981

This 57-year-old vineyard, that had dropped nearly 80% in yield by the last year of the drought, recovered fully in 1979. The individual berries were relatively large and, picked before they could overripen, produced an elegant firm wine that, for once, shows the fruit typical of the Sierra Foothills. As with most of our vintages from Fiddletown, it will need at least a year of bottle age to begin to open and another three or four to soften further. PD (3/81)

Begun in 1959, Ridge was one of the first of today's chateau-size California wineries, that is, those that attempt only the highest quality at the quantity levels of the classified chateaux (up to 40,000 cases). All the wines are aged in small oak cooperage with the majority receiving no cellar treatment other than racking. Located above 2300 feet on Monte Bello Ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains, our winery and main vineyards overlook San Francisco Bay. For information on ordering wines or visiting us for tasting, please send a note or call (408) 867-3233. DRB (1/80)

NET CONTENTS

750ML

PRODUCT OF CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

**RIDGE
CALIFORNIA
ZINFANDEL
FIDDLETOWN
1979**

ESCHEN VINEYARD, 95% ZINFANDEL, 5% PETITE SIRAH
FOOTHILLS AMADOR COUNTY ALCOHOL 13.8% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, BOX A-I, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA



78 Zinfandel, LATE PICKED, bottled May 1980

This old Fiddletown vineyard produces a wine distinct in character from that typical of the nearby Shenandoah Valley. Like a fine claret, it is generally more tannic, less fruity, and not as appealing when young. This excellent wine should be laid down for at least two years to begin to open up and for an additional three or more years to develop further. PD (3/80)

Initial Sugar in Grapes at Harvest 25.0% By Weight
Residual Sugar in Finished Wine 0.10% By Weight

Begun in 1959, Ridge was one of the first of today's chateau-size California wineries, that is, those that attempt only the highest quality at the quantity levels of the classified chateaux (up to 40,000 cases). All the wines are aged in small oak cooperage with the majority receiving no cellar treatment other than racking. Located above 2300 feet on Monte Bello Ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains, our winery and main vineyards overlook San Francisco Bay. For information on ordering wines or visiting us for tasting, please send a note or call (408) 867-3233. DRB (1/80)

IMPORTED BY GLOBCOR VIN S.A. R.L.
46 RUE ALBERT-THOMAS, 75010 PARIS, FRANCE

NET CONTENTS

750ML

PRODUCT OF CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

**RIDGE
CALIFORNIA
ZINFANDEL
FIDDLETOWN
1978**

ESCHEN VINEYARD, 95% ZINFANDEL, 5% PETITE SIRAH
FOOTHILLS AMADOR COUNTY ALCOHOL 14.9% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, BOX A-I, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA



'77 Zinfandel, Fiddletown, bottled April 1979

We have always felt that the lower the yield and the smaller the berry size, the more intense and interesting the wine. However, in the second year of the drought these old vines dropped 70% from their typical yield of two tons per acre and we learned that there are limits beyond which further stress has no positive effect. The wine is quite tannic and needs several years of bottle age to show its elegant claret qualities. PD (3/79)

RIDGE wine is made with an emphasis on quality and naturalness that is rarely attempted. Our grapes are grown in select vineyards (usually identified on the label), where they are left to ripen to peak maturity, often at some loss of quantity. We let the wine settle and age in small barrels, with only rare cellar treatment other than racking. Varieties are not blended unless so indicated on the label. Near Black Mountain on Monte Bello Ridge, our main vineyard is 10 miles south of Palo Alto, 15 miles inland from the ocean, and over 2000 feet in elevation. For requesting information on ordering wines or visiting the winery for tasting, please send us a note or call (408) 867-3233. DRB (1967)

RIDGE
CALIFORNIA
ZINFANDEL
FIDDLETOWN
1977

ESCHEN RANCH, 55 YEAR OLD VINES, 100% ZINFANDEL
FOOTHILLS, AMADOR COUNTY ALCOHOL 12.4% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS, BW 4488
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, BOX A-I, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA



76 Zinfandel, Fiddletown, bottled May 1978

The drought cut down the size of the crop on these old vines and we picked the grapes early to attempt the elegant claret style of the 1975. The grape tannin and the oak are quite evident but the fruit typical of the region comes through. This fine wine should be laid down for at least two years to show well and probably needs four or five years to develop fully. PD (1/78)

RIDGE wine is made with an emphasis on quality and naturalness that is rarely attempted. Our grapes are grown in select vineyards (usually identified on the label), where they are left to ripen to peak maturity, often at some loss of quantity. We let the wine settle and age in small barrels, with only rare cellar treatment other than racking. Varieties are not blended unless so indicated on the label. Near Black Mountain on Monte Bello Ridge, our main vineyard is 10 miles south of Palo Alto, 15 miles inland from the ocean, and over 2000 feet in elevation. For requesting information on ordering wines or visiting the winery for tasting, please send us a note or call (408) 867-3233. DRB (1967)

RIDGE
CALIFORNIA
ZINFANDEL
FIDDLETOWN
1976

GRAPES FROM ESCHEN RANCH, SIERRA FOOTHILLS
AMADOR COUNTY ALCOHOL 12.1% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA



75 Zinfandel, Fiddletown, bottled September 1977

The cool growing season affected the grapes and our fermentation temperatures, which averaged 10°F lower than usual, and produced wines that are more elegant and less tannic than a warm year like 1974. The old vines on the outskirts of the gold rush camp of Fiddletown produced this excellent, claret-style Zinfandel. It should be enjoyable to taste by December, but really needs several years of bottle age.

PD (8/77)

RIDGE wine is made with an emphasis on quality and naturalness that is rarely attempted. Our grapes are grown in select vineyards (usually identified on the label), where they are left to ripen to peak maturity, often at some loss of quantity. We let the wine settle and age in small barrels, with only rare cellar treatment other than racking. Varieties are not blended unless so indicated on the label. Near Black Mountain on Monte Bello Ridge, our main vineyard is 10 miles south of Palo Alto, 15 miles inland from the ocean, and over 2000 feet in elevation. For requesting information on ordering wines or visiting the winery for tasting, please send us a note or call (408) 867-3233.

DRB (1967)

RIDGE

CALIFORNIA

ZINFANDEL

FIDDLETOWN

1975

GRAPES FROM **ESCHEN RANCH**, AMADOR COUNTY
SIERRA FOOTHILLS ALCOHOL 12.8% BY VOLUME
PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY RIDGE VINEYARDS
17100 MONTE BELLO RD, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA

5 March 1983

Department of the Treasury
Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P.O. Box 385
Washington, D.C. 20044-0385

Subject: Fiddletown Viticulture Area, Notice no. 456.

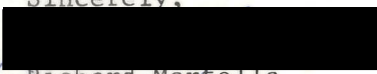
Dear Sir;


The purpose of this letter is to comment on whether the petitioned area could be reduced in size. Following a lengthy discussion at our most recent meeting of our Grape Growers Association, it was felt by the growers that the petitioned area remain as petitioned. We offer the following considerations for maintaining the proposed size.

- A. Proposed boundaries follow as much as possible naturally occurring geographic boundaries such as mountain regions, vally and streams.
- B. It is also felt that area has similar climatic conditions.
- C. While proposed area includes over 11,500 acres and contains only 310 acres of existing grapes, it is estimated that total acreage when developed will only be around 1,000. Although the area is large, much of the soil and land is not suitable because of extreme rugged terrain such as slopes facing poor directions. Grapes can only be grown on small hill tops with southern slopes. Thus, after carefully studying the area (including maps, walking some spots, and aircraft observation) we conclude that approximately 1000 acres are suitable for vineyard development.
- D. As there are already around 310 acres of grapes scattered throughout the proposed area and unlike some other Viticulture Region proposals that exclude some growers, we decided to include all those grape growers in the area that have similar climate and soil conditions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Richard Martella
Vice President
Fiddletown Grape
Growers Assoc.


John Lewis
Sec't./Treasurer
Fiddletown Grape
Growers Assoc.

Santino Winery

Rt 2, 24A Steiner Rd.

Plymouth, Ca. 95669

245-3555


August 11, 1982

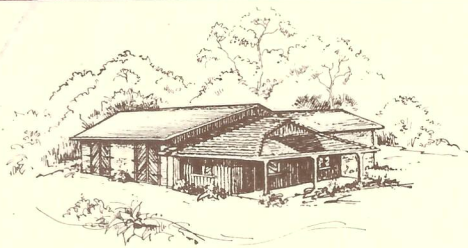
Bureau of Alcohol,
Tobacco and Firearms

Gentlemen:

As the owner and founder of Santino Winery I have realized the importance of Fiddletown Zinfandel over several harvests. The Zinfandel from Fiddletown produces our best bottle of wine, and, commands the highest retail price. It is the goal of my winery to increase production of wine from the Fiddletown region this year and in the near future. Recognition of this region, (Fiddletown) is of key importance to us for our marketing purpose.

Sincerely,


Mathew N. Santino
Santino Winery



SANTINO

Special
Selection

1980

FIDDLETOWN

ZINFANDEL

Amador County

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY SANTINO WINES
SHENANDOAH VALLEY, PLYMOUTH, CALIFORNIA
ALCOHOL 14% BY VOLUME

The Santino Winery is located in the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County, California. Amador County having warm days and cool Sierra Nevada Foothill nights produces some of California's finest Zinfandel wines.

This wine is 1980 Zinfandel, grown by Eschen Vineyards in Fiddletown, Amador County. Chester Eschen's 60 year old non-irrigated vineyard, is grown using the old fashioned head pruning method, which produces small yields of high quality Zinfandel. The wine was uniquely fermented by submerging the cap throughout fermentation and cellar aged in small French oak barrels. Due to the wines small production, we were able to carefully watch its development, thus being able to avoid fining or filtering the wine. Because of the low vineyard yield, we produced only a limited amount, this being
bottle of 1,430 cases:

For more information about our wines, tastings and tours, please call or write us at the winery.
Scott Harvey
Winemaker



SANTINO

SPECIAL
SELECTION

1979

FIDDLETOWN

ZINFANDEL

Amador County

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY SANTINO WINES
SHENANDOAH VALLEY, PLYMOUTH, CALIFORNIA
ALCOHOL 14% BY VOLUME

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bottle of 1,430 cases.

For more information about our wines, tastings and tours, please call or write us at the winery.
Scott Harvey
Winemaker

Santino Winery

Rt 2, 21A Steiner Rd.

Plymouth, Ca. 95669

245-3555

August 9, 1982

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Research and Regulations Branch
Washington, D.C. 20226

Gentlemen:

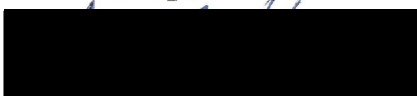
I am writing in support of the petition by the Fiddletown Grape Growers for a Fiddletown appellation.

As winemaker and winery manager for Santino Winery, I have used Zinfandel grapes from the Fiddletown area every year since the winery was bonded in 1979. The grapes from Chester Eschen's 60-year-old vineyards have produced our best and most expensive Zinfandel wines. Each vintage has come in with the sugar-acid balance conducive to producing some of the world's finest wines.

The name Fiddletown has been developed on the Santino Winery label, and the consumer has a strong acceptance of the Fiddletown name as being associated with the highest quality attainable in Zinfandel wine. We support the Fiddletown appellation so that we may continue using the name on future bottlings. We would suffer greatly in the marketplace if the Fiddletown name were to be missing from our label.

As a consultant to Fiddletown Vineyards, a promising new vineyard, and as a young family man in Amador County, I am currently looking for vineyard land of my own. My first choice is the Fiddletown area, because it grows the highest quality Zinfandel grapes in California.

Sincerely,



Scott Harvey
Winemaker



July 24, 1982

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
Research and Regulations Branch
Washington, D. C. 20226

Dear BATF Representative:

We write in support of the petition of the Fiddletown Growers Association for a Fiddletown appellation. As an Amador County, California winery, we are especially well acquainted with the high quality grapes of the Fiddletown area. We have bought Fiddletown Zinfandel grapes during each year of our wine production and plan to continue to do so indefinitely. The Fiddletown growing region produces some of the best Zinfandel grapes in existence, and has achieved nationwide renown. Our 1980 Fiddletown Zinfandel label bears the words "Fiddletown, Amador County Zinfandel". That designation brings a higher price and ensures rapid sales. Discerning Zinfandel wine buyers know the significance of the region. It is of the utmost importance to the wine industry and to wine consumers that this appellation be granted.

The Fiddletown region is one of the oldest premium grape growing areas in California. Some of its vines are over 100 years of age. It is largely responsible for the "discovery" of Zinfandel as a premium wine. Growers in Fiddletown have sold to Harbor and Sutter Home Wineries -- the first wineries to produce a premium Zinfandel from Amador County. More crucial to the reputation of the area, however, is the fact that it has provided Zinfandel to such prestigious wineries as Ridge, David Bruce, Carneros Creek, and Mondavi. The Ridge Fiddletown Zinfandel is known to many connoisseurs as the best Zinfandel in the world. The great fame of the Fiddletown Zinfandel is due to the fact that its Zinfandel grapes ripen with both a high sugar and high acid levels, making it a wine that lasts. A well-aged Fiddletown Zinfandel is second to none.

In addition to the approximately 160 acres of established vineyards in Fiddletown, there is much prime vineyard acreage that will no doubt be developed within the next few years. It is reasonable to assume that the Fiddletown region will contain at least 500 acres of Zinfandel within the next decade.

There is no doubt in our minds that the Fiddletown region qualifies as a distinct viticultural area, and that it is a viticultural area of such importance that it is crucial that it be granted the appellation of Fiddletown as requested. It would be a disservice to the discerning wine consumer to let this important wine region's name go into labeling obsolescence.

Sincerely yours,

 
Benjamin B. Zeitman & Joan E. Sieber
Co-proprietors