

2011 Bella Vineyards Zinfandel Two Patch Alexander Valley

Mike Dashe's Geyserville Zinfandel "Two Patch"

Up until the late 1960s, Zinfandel was little more than a jug-wine grape. But in 1969, a 36-year-old Stanford graduate, fresh off a brief stint at Château Latour in Pauillac, was named head winemaker at Ridge Vineyards. **In just five years, Paul Draper — working almost exclusively with old-vine, head-trained Zinfandel parcels — transformed the reputation of the variety, turning out some of the most extraordinarily age-worthy reds of their time.**

Draper's single-vineyard Zinfandel lineup is unparalleled, a dazzling array of richly textured, complex, beautifully structured reds drawn off old plantings in Dry Creek, Amador, Paso Robles, and the high-elevation slopes of Howell and Spring mountains.



But as any Zinfandel collector — or Draper's most illustrious protégé, Mike Dashe — will tell you, **the most remarkable Draper Zinfandels have been drawn off the undulating hills of Alexander Valley, just outside the town of Geyserville.**

Shortly after completing his masters degree in enology at Cal Davis in 1987, Mike Dashe accepted an internship with Gil Nickel at Far Niente. From there, it was on to New Zealand's Cloudy Bay, working under the watchful eyes of winemaker Kevin Judd. Then, following in Paul Draper's footsteps, Dashe left for Pauillac, where he snared a winemaking position at Château Lafite-Rothschild under famed technical director Gilbert Rokvam.

But it wouldn't be until Dashe completed his round-the-world tour and returned to California that he landed the job that would set the stage for his brilliant winemaking career. In 1990, Paul Draper — after eyeballing Dashe's résumé — offered Mike the assistant winemaking position at Ridge. **For the first six years that Dashe worked under Draper he soaked up the master's words and techniques like a sponge.** When Mike finally hung out his own shingle in 1996, no winemaker on the coast was so well-equipped to carry Draper's torch — particularly when it came to fashioning Zinfandel off the rugged Alexander Valley soils outside of Geyserville.

In the chilly 2010 vintage, Dashe put on a show at Bella Vineyards, turning out two 95-point Zinfandels — the highest of the year from Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate*. But in the still-cooler 2011 campaign, Dashe did one better. **Returning to his Geyserville stomping grounds, working with old-vine clusters from Todd Brothers and Big River ranches, Mike crafted one of the most stunning Zinfandels of his now-storied career.** Lynn and Scott Adams at Bella Vineyards call Dashe's special cuvée "Two Patch."

The 2011 Bella Vineyards "Two Patch" Zinfandel is a graceful powerhouse. **Deep purple to the edge, the nose alone is well worth the price of admission, featuring a sensual mix of black cherry, white pepper, tobacco, and menthol.** Rich, round, plush — velour-like in texture — the core is packed with black fruit and black cherry preserves, tinged with sweet spices, finishing with classic Geyserville tension and persistence. **Drink now for its primary-fruit opulence, or do as we've always done with the great Geyserville Zins and lay down Mike Dashe's 2011 until the early 2020s.**

\$40 on release. As good as top-pedigree, age-worthy Zinfandel ever gets at under \$30/bottle. **\$19.99 ONLY on WineAccess. No misprint.**