



Jim and Eliza Rickards have 50 acres of Old Vine Zinfandel (1908), Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Malbec. From their Cloverdale vineyards, their grapes are used in wines from Silver Oak, Dry Creek and Geyser Peak. Their food and wine favorites include: grapevine grilled salmon with Zinfandel, wild mushroom risotto with Sauvignon Blanc and roasted lamb with Cabernet Sauvignon.

Grower and Spouse names:

Jim and Eliza Rickards

Vineyard/Ranch name:

J. Rickards Vineyards

Appellation:**How long have you farmed this property?**

26 years (1976)

Total acreage managed and grape varieties planted:

Approximately 50 acres. Old Vine Zinfandel (1908), Hillside Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Malbec.

Why did you become a grape grower?

Being a farmer is what I love to do: being a good steward of the land in a place that is very special and growing a product that is world class.

Farming philosophy:

Sustainable, minimal input, minimal impact on the surrounding environment.

What changes in farming practice do you anticipate making in the next 5 years?

Adopt more organic practices, make more use of technology for water conservation and pest management.

What was your worst horror story in grape growing?

The harvest of 1988 when it rained two inches while we were picking the grapes. Tractors were stuck in the mud, but the grapes were really clean.

Is your vineyard designated on any wine labels?

Which ones? Not at this time. We sell to wineries where we have had a long-term relationship: Dry Creek, Geyser Peak and Silver Oak.

What is your favorite food/wine combination?

Grapevine grilled salmon with zinfandel; Wild mushroom risotto with sauvignon blanc; Roasted lamb with cabernet sauvignon.

Employee note: Greatest length of service or other item of interest about your workforce.

The same family has worked for us for 26 years. In fact our foreman, Juan Favela, who has been employed for 11 years is the son-in-law of my very first employee in 1976. Our three full-time workers, all brothers, have developed into viticultural professionals and are a critical part of what we do and a large part of our success.