

OTTIMINO

OTTIMINO VINEYARD

Brad Alper's Ottimino Vineyard provided the grapes for Ottimino's first vintage. Located on the same ridgeline as **Von Weidlich** and **Rancho Bello** Vineyards, Ottimino shares their Goldridge soil structure and the same temperate climatic traits. The vines are divided into three blocks, each planted to a different field selection of Zinfandel. The budwood was obtained from benchmark old vine Zinfandel vineyards, including selections known as Mendocino and Bradford Mountain. Grafting to vigorous and disease-resistant St. George rootstock minimized virus potential and will ensure vine growth under dry-farmed conditions.

The vineyard rows run nearly north to south, which provides for full exposure to the sunlight during the long summer days. The vines are trained in a vertical cordon, allowing the grape clusters optimal exposure to dappled sunlight and gentle, cooling breezes. As with all of Ottimino's vineyards, the vines are cropped for low yields in an effort to achieve unique flavors and unparalleled quality.

RANCHO BELLO VINEYARD

Albert Bello's vineyard sits on a northwestern ridge above Green Valley, one of the sub-appellations of the Russian River Valley. This high point, at an elevation of about 800 feet, is a "banana belt" of sorts, receiving more sunshine and warmth and averaging 8 to 10 degrees higher in temperature than adjacent areas. Groundwater is scarce, but rainfall is at least double the amount received in the nearby communities of Sebastopol and Santa Rosa, giving the vineyard a great head start in the spring.

Soils are Goldridge Series and therefore mostly sand and loam. Dry farming amplifies the stress of this somewhat marginal soil, making many of Rancho Bello's vines look older and more gnarled than their age. The clusters of Zinfandel hang what seems an eternity in this cool, stressed environment.

VON WEIDLICH VINEYARD

Robert Von Weidlich's vineyard exudes history. Purchasing the property in 1969 from the Morelli family, he became only the second owner of the land. Zinfandel had been planted there in 1937, grafted from vines originally brought from Italy in 1884 but abandoned during Prohibition. Robert planted additional vines in 1969, selecting budwood from the 1937 planting. Robert refers to these as "German-pruned," meaning head-trained but with a goblet of canes higher than usual, about four feet from the soil. Both the older planting and the German pruned vines are organic (though not certified so) and dry-farmed, with weeds removed by hoe and all cultivation being done by hand.

The soil is Goldridge sandy loam, and the vines luxuriate in year round temperate weather and ample rainfall, as a result of the 800 foot elevation and the influence of the coastal marine layer. Though the Green Valley area of Russian River is generally cool, the Von Weidlich Vineyard, like all of Ottimino's Vineyards, averages nearly 10 degrees warmer than adjacent areas. Rain and warmth awaken the vines early in spring, and the fruit ripens excruciatingly slowly in October. The average yield over many years is well below 2 tons to the acre.