Located northwest of the town of Healdsburg in Sonoma County, the Dry Creek Valley is one of California’s smallest appellations, measuring just 16 miles long and two miles wide. The area was discovered in the 1870’s by Italian immigrants, who were reminded of the hills in their native Tuscany and Piedmont. They planted Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Carignan grapes on the Dry Creek Valley’s benchlands to emulate the hearty red wines to which they were accustomed, often inter-planting the varieties to create “field-blended” wines.

The Dry Creek Valley’s warm summer days—tempered by morning fog from the Pacific Ocean—and its well-drained, stony soils translate to highly concentrated and complex fruit. The 2016 season brought a relatively wet, mild spring and early summer. As a result, both Zinfandel and Petite Sirah grapes ripened fairly slow, creating wines with an excellent balance of acidity and tannins.

The grapes for this Zinfandel underwent a three-day cold soak, and a starter yeast was used to initiate fermentation at 75°F. During a maceration period of 10 to 12 days, the juice was pumped over the skins daily to maximize the extraction of the variety’s rich flavor and tannins. Délestage—an oxygenation technique—was employed during active fermentation to soften the wine and showcase its fruit character. This Zinfandel was aged in a combination of French and American oak barrels, 29% of which was new.

The Folie à Deux 2016 Zinfandel opens with expressive black cherry, mocha and strawberry jam aromas framed by hints of white pepper and clove. Robust flavors with notes of dark chocolate, blackberry, strawberry, blueberry compote, fennel and baking spice lead to a full-bodied, structured mouthfeel. Bright acidity and silky tannins on the palate accentuate the juicy fruits. For an excellent pairing, serve this wine with braised pork topped with Sunday Gravy, smoked brisket or maple-glazed carrots.