



Zinfandel, California's "Mystery" Grape

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Faculty Club, Univ. of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$74; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$94

Summer is here! Barbeque and grilling season has started and what better wine to serve with steaks and ribs than a big-bodied Zinfandel? This is a great opportunity to try a number of different Zins that have been sourced from various counties in California: 5 from Sonoma, and 1 each from Napa, Contra Costa and Paso Robles.

The history of Zinfandel reads like a good detective novel. Although Zinfandel is typically associated with California, it is not a native varietal. Modern DNA tests have revealed that Zinfandel grapes are descended from an obscure Croatian grape variety - known as Crljenak Kaštelanski or Tribidrag – of which little remains today. Sometime in the early nineteenth century it travelled to New England where it became a popular table grape. Then the Gold Rush in California brought many immigrant settlers, which led to the increase in Zinfandel cultivation. The dominance of Zinfandel in California and the lack of French heritage led many to believe it is an American original - until modern analysis proved otherwise. But where the name "Zinfandel" comes from remains a mystery.

Today, Zinfandel is one of the oldest grape varieties in California representing about 10 percent of all California vineyards. It's a challenging grape to grow. Its berry size varies significantly within a bunch, which leads to uneven ripening. Because of that, Zinfandel often needs to hang on the vine longer to ripen as many berries as possible. Old vine Zins, made from vines that are typically 50+ years, are coveted for their intensity - in flavor, color and balanced overall style.

Zinfandel grapes produce wines with strong flavors and tannins, aromas of berries (raspberry, blackberry, cherry, plums), slightly spicy flavours (black pepper) and often high alcohol content. As a result, Zin is usually best paired with hearty meat and spicy foods – and is great for summer BBQ's! Generally Zinfandel should be consumed within a couple of years of bottling but those with higher tannins and oak aging can be kept for up to a decade. You will see from the tasting notes that four years of cellaring is a good time to start opening and enjoying these wines while they are fresh and lively.

The event price includes a reception wine, bread, appetizers and of course, our main wines! Please refrain from wearing scented products. Dress is business casual. We are beyond thrilled to have as our guest speaker - **David Lawrason** of [Wine Align](#). David is Canada's leading wine expert and the top wine writer in Ontario. Hope you will join us for an interesting evening of wonderful wines.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at https://form.jotform.com/tvc_wine/zinfandel. You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** Cheques must be received by **Friday, June 14th**. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact winetastings@torontovintners.org before trying to register again.



Tasting Notes and Information – Zinfandel

(Prices are as of date of purchase)

2012 Cline Big Break Vineyard \$38

“Much like its counterpart from the same vineyard, the 2012 Zinfandel Big Break's bouquet reveals the same minty character as was found in the Grenache Big Break. However, once it hits the palate, it is pure Zinfandel, displaying flavors of bramble berries, briary raspberries and black cherries, pepper, earth and spice. Again, the mintiness will be a "love it or leave it" component for most tasters. Drink now-2017. “ 88 points. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2012 Ravenswood Big River Alexander Valley \$46

“The winery described the 2012 Big River Vineyard Zinfandel as “wonderfully juicy with black, jammy fruit. Good texture is the hallmark of this weighty wine.” Wine Spectator described this wine as “big and ripe, focused and complex, with bold black cherry and toasty spice aromas leading to jammy flavors of raspberry, mocha and spicy licorice. Drink now through 2022.” 91 points *Wine Spectator*.

2012 Ravenswood Old Hill Sonoma Valley \$61

“Powerful and deeply structured, with distinctive aromas of smoked pepper, black raspberry and fruitcake spices. The flavors balance ripe tannins and lively acidity, offering notes of blackberry, dark chocolate, licorice and mineral. Best from 2016 through 2024. “ 93 points. *Wine Spectator*.

2012 Seghesio Cortina Dry Creek Valley \$65

“From Dry Creek Valley, the 2012 Zinfandel Cortina is named for the gravelly, loamy soil from which this wine is sourced. It exhibits a dark ruby color, peppery, strawberry fruit, medium body, but surprisingly not the power and overall depth and richness of the 2013 Sonoma Zinfandel. Nevertheless, it is a good effort that should be consumed over the next several years.” 87 points. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2012 Quivira Dry Creek Valley Reserve \$44

“The 2012 Zinfandel Reserve (14.5% natural alcohol) is a selection of the finest barrels. Slightly denser than the Quest, with darker blackberry and black cherry fruits, a more primordial meatiness, a medium to full-bodied mouthfeel, impressive purity and freshness, this is classic Dry Creek Zinfandel to drink over the next 5-6 years.” 92 points. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2012 Frog's Leap Napa Valley \$45

“Wine Spectator awarded this wine 91 points. Jancis Robinson’s wrote that this wine comes from “40-year-old vineyard. A field blend with some Petite Sirah, Carignan, and Valdigue, co-fermented. Transparent. Intense and round. Fresh and lively. Atypical.” 16.5/20 points. Jancis Robinson.

2013 Gamba Family Ranches \$60

“The 2013 Zinfandel Family Ranches has a dense ruby/purple color, and the wine shows glorious levels of blackberry and cherry fruit with pepper and roasted meat. It is unctuously textured, full-bodied, and a terrific, rich, heady Zinfandel to drink over the next 5-7 years. These are pretty serious Zinfandels and certainly Gamba’s name is going to have to be included with some of the stars of Sonoma, such as Hartford Court, Carlisle, Bedrock and even the superstar Turley over in Napa.” 92 points. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2013 Peachy Canyon Mustang Springs \$60

“A nose of sour cherry and cranberry meshes with sandalwood and savory herbs on this single-site study by the longtime Paso producer. The palate is overflowing with oregano and other dried garden herbs, laid against a juicy red and purple-fruit frame.” 90 points. Matt Kettmann, *Wine Advocate*.