

RESOURCE GUIDE TO ZINFANDEL



ZAP



This Guide is presented to aid in the understanding of all aspects of the Zinfandel grape.

The Association of Zinfandel Advocates & Producers (ZAP) is a non profit educational organization dedicated to advancing the public's knowledge of and appreciation for Zinfandel grown in America and its unique place in American culture and history. The common focus is the preservation and recognition of Zinfandel as America's wine.

RESOURCE GUIDE TO ZINFANDEL

Published by the Zinfandel Advocates & Producers (ZAP)

Enjoying Zinfandel is a way of life! Zinfandel is truly America's Heritage Wine. It generates an enthusiasm and magic that captures our pioneering spirit in a bottle. This love of the grape that's truly American is associated with the Wild West, the Gold Rush, and rugged individualists, riding through unexplored territory in a brand new land. There are restaurants named after Zinfandel; there are mushrooming numbers of chat rooms devoted to Zinfandel; the mainstream media and pop culture have also taken note of the magic of Zinfandel.

Throughout this guide, as part of ZAP's educational mission, we endeavor to provide insight into Zinfandel's unique place in the pantheon of great varietals. Where does Zinfandel grow best? What are the characteristics of Zinfandel grown in different regions? How does Zinfandel effect America's culture and cuisine? The answers to these intriguing questions and more are explored within these pages, and our hope is that we will stimulate further interest, insight and debate about this fascinating grape.

The Resource Guide to Zinfandel is an example of the resources provided by the only organization of devotees for a grape that includes growers, winemakers, and enthusiasts: Zinfandel Advocates & Producers, or ZAP. As an educational organization, ZAP distributes a seasonal newsletter and produces an assortment of events throughout each year. Our Zinfandel Advocates & Producers Festival, which attracts over 10,000 attendees annually, raises hundreds of thousands of dollars to support the Heritage Projects — programs devoted to Zinfandel research and wine education. These programs include the creation of the Zinfandel Aroma Wheel; ZAP's ZINWorld website—a comprehensive resource center and social networking site; and the ongoing research of the Heritage Vineyard Projects.

The Resource Guide to Zinfandel reflects the talents and expertise of many, including: University of California at Davis Professors James Wolpert, Carole Meredith, and Ann Noble; researcher/historian Charles Sullivan; wine writers Jancis Robinson, Hugh Johnson, David Darlington, Cathleen Francisco and Ian Hutton; and the ZAP Board of Directors. A special note of thanks to The Wine Institute for its support. This Resource Guide springs from the enormous—and uniquely Zin-like—enthusiasm and exuberance of all of those who love Zinfandel.

Cheers!



Rebecca Robinson
Executive Director

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Real Zinfandel, the red wine, is the quintessential California wine. It has been used for blending with other grapes, including Cabernet and Petite Sirah. It has been made in a claret style, with berry and cherry flavors, mild tannins and pretty oak shadings. It has been made into late-harvest and Port-style wines that feature very ripe, raisiny flavors, alcohol above 15% and chewy tannins.

— Jancis Robinson, *Wine Writer*

Zinfandel is immensely successful and popular for all levels of wine from blends to fresh, light versions and to galumphing sticky blackstrap.

The best have excellent balance, a lively raspberry flavor and seem to mature indefinitely.

— Hugh Johnson, *Wine Writer*

ZINFANDEL: THE “HORATIO ALGER” OF AMERICAN GRAPE VARIETALS

Why is the Zinfandel grape considered uniquely American?

Like a Horatio Alger hero, the Zinfandel grape has advanced from rags to riches. Its transformation from a little-known grape to one that is grown on over 50,000 acres in the United States and achieved tremendous popularity is the all-American success story.

Zinfandel had no precedent and hence had to invent itself. Makers of California Cabernet Sauvignon know that their yardstick stands in Bordeaux; producers of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay compete with the climate and soils of Burgundy; American Rieslings are judged by how well they evoke the valley of the Rhine. These standards have developed in Europe over several centuries, while the vines that produce such wines in the United States have scarcely been in the ground for decades. The world’s oldest Zinfandel vines, however, are growing in California. Its tradition—such as it exists after only a hundred years—has evolved along with American winemaking and is still evolving. For better or worse, Zinfandel has been California’s native contribution to the international world of wine.

— David Darlington, *Author: Angels’ Visits: An Inquiry Into The Mystery of Zinfandel*

What is the origin of the name Zinfandel in America?

Historian Charles Sullivan has traced references from “Zinfendal” in Boston in the 1830s, to other references to “Zinfindal” throughout the Northeast United States, to “Zinfandel” in California in the 1860s. Some historical works refer to “Zingarello” as a relative of Zinfandel, but that has not been substantiated. Ongoing research continues about where and how the grape came to America, and the linguistic origin of the name Zinfandel.

Is Zinfandel a white grape or a red grape?

You have seen the term “White Zinfandel” and wines labeled simply “Zinfandel.” Zinfandel is a red grape whose juice is clear. There is just one Zinfandel grape, and depending on the winemaking techniques used, it can be made in a number of styles. When making “red” Zinfandel, the wine-maker decides how long to let the juice remain in contact with the stems, seeds, and skins, which causes clear juice to assume the red color.

CULTIVATION

Where is Zinfandel grown in America today?

Although California is by far the primary Zinfandel growing state, small amounts are also cultivated in Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. In California, Zinfandel is grown in the following regions: Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Lake, Central Valley, Central Coast, Bay Area, Sierra Foothills, and Southern California. More information on these regions, including maps, can be found on pages 14–22.

Where else is Zinfandel grown?

In recent years, Zinfandel has been planted in Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Chile, Argentina, France, Italy, and Croatia.

Is there anything different or unusual about how Zinfandel grows?

Essentially Zinfandel is unique in vinifera varieties in California in that it has a larger cluster and is a fairly vigorous vine. What really sets it apart from other vinifera varieties is that the berries within the bunch ripen unevenly and, hence you have berries that are slightly underripe, perfectly ripe, and some actually verging on dehydrated or raisiny in the same cluster. This leads to the unique flavor dynamics of great Zinfandel. It produces bright acidity from the slightly unripe areas, perfect fruit flavors from the ripe berries, and concentration and depth from the slightly withered or overripe berries. It is also the factor that makes Zinfandel so difficult to pick at the right moment because your choices of proportion of those various elements of the fruit determine the quality of the characteristics of the wine you want to produce.

— Joel Peterson, Ravenswood Winery

How are the terms “head pruning” and “old vines” related to Zinfandel?

All old vines are head pruned. There are a number of slightly different variations, some higher, some lower. When I’ve gone to visit farmers with head-pruned old Zinfandel vines, you hear about “heading it at hip or pocket height.” It turns out, of course, that people are different heights: a six-foot-tall farmer has a different hip height than a five-foot-tall farmer. The standards that were used were variable standards, and thus, in California, head pruning each vineyard took on its own look, in an attempt to adapt the vine to its particular soil and climate conditions.

— Joel Peterson, Ravenswood Winery

Vinifera is the species name of the European grape vine used in wine production in the United States. It is different from the rupestris or labrusca species that are among the species native to the United States. Vinifera varieties produce much better fruit for fine wine production.

“Old vines” is generally understood to mean a vine that is more than 50 years old and that produces less than three tons per acre.

“Head pruning” is an old European style of pruning that trains the vine in the shape of a goblet. It requires no wires or other complex trellis systems. Head pruning spreads the fruit uniformly along the vine and allows light penetration.



There are really two grape varieties in the world. Grapes that tell the truth, and grapes that don't tell the truth. Zinfandel is one of the great truth-telling wines of the world. Even if Zinfandel is blended with other varieties, it can accommodate them and still show its true character.

Although Zinfandel, which is primarily grown in California, is often called "America's heritage grape," it hasn't been receiving the attention it deserves. Zinfandel is like a masterpiece painting that has been hanging in the hallway for so long, the family has forgotten they even own a masterpiece. We are returning to Zinfandel as a vehicle for the voice of the land.

— Matt Kramer, Wine Writer

HISTORY

When and where did Zinfandel first arrive in America?

Historians have traced Zinfandel back to the 1820s, when George Gibbs, a Long Island, New York, nursery owner brought cuttings back to the United States from the Imperial collection of plant species in Vienna, Austria. By 1832, a Boston nursery was advertising "Zinfendal" vines for sale; between 1835 and 1845, "Zinfandel" had become a popular table grape in the Northeastern United States. Frederick Macondray, a nursery owner from Massachusetts, is credited with bringing Zinfandel vines to California during that time.

What is Zinfandel's relationship to the Gold Rush in California?

After the 1849 Gold Rush, timber and wire were scarce. Zinfandel grapes could be planted in a way that made harvesting possible without special equipment. Called "head pruning," it's a technique still used today. When you see a vineyard with vines standing about three feet tall without wires, you can assume that you're looking at Zinfandel. Many of these vineyards are still producing even though they may have passed the century mark. Some Zinfandel wines even have an "old vines" designation.

— Charles Sullivan, *Historian*

Why is Zinfandel considered America's Heritage Wine?

Zinfandel surged in popularity during the Gold Rush in California, when miners wanted a substantial beverage and growers hoped for a grape that would provide a healthy and voluminous crop. It seems that everybody got their wish, and today, if you are traveling through one of California's wine regions, you might sometimes see an "old vine" head-pruned vineyard and, thus, a glimpse into the California of a century ago.

What is the source of the Zinfandel grape in America?

The grape used in making Zinfandel wine in America is of European origin, but history does not clearly delineate its migratory route. Scientific research conducted by UC Davis viticulture geneticist Professor Carole Meredith and several Croatian research colleagues have given us new insight into a more complete history of the grape.

Historically, Croatia has had several indigenous varieties related to Zinfandel, but most were lost in the late 19th century. One well-documented route of Zinfandel to California indicates that the grape came from an Austrian collection. It is possible that Austria obtained the vines during its rule over Croatia. It wasn't until 2001 that researchers discovered just nine remaining vines of locally-known "Crljenak Kaštelanski" on Croatia's Dalmation coast.

Meredith conducted DNA fingerprinting on the two grapes and confirmed that the ancient Croatian variety had the same DNA structure as California Zinfandel.

The wonderment of Zinfandel compels researchers to continue their quest to understand the unique success of Zinfandel's California clones compared to their counterparts from other parts of the world. So, research by ZAP and the University of California at Davis continues.

Zinfandel is thought to be one of the oldest grape varieties from which wine is still being made.



ZINFANDEL: STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

FLAVORS & AROMAS



Aromas and flavors in a wine come primarily from the grapes from which it is made. These aromas and flavors will depend upon where the grapes were grown, the age of the vines, the clone of Zinfandel, the pruning method and subsequent crop level, the elevation of the vineyard, the ripeness of the grapes at harvest, the impact of the weather the year the grapes were harvested, and complex winemaking decisions regarding type of fermentation, type of oak barrels used, and the like. A winemaker may add oak aging for additional complexity, or not. A winemaker might whole-cluster-crush, or not. No rigid protocols dictate how Zinfandel grapes are made into wine. But grape

growers and winemakers recognize the importance of using site selections and winemaking techniques to enhance Zinfandel's bewitching varietal characteristics rather than to disguise them.

*For those whose passion is Zinfandel,
the joy of exploring this variety is always
a wondrous, mouth-pleasing pleasure.
To newcomers of Zinfandel, it is a
welcome surprise.*

— Cathleen Francisco,
*Zinfandel: A Reference Guide to
California Zinfandel*

When ZAP asked its member wineries to describe the grape's unique attributes, the most usually cited characteristics were aromas and flavors of blackberry, raspberry, boysenberry and cherry, oftentimes laced with black pepper, cloves, anise and herbs. In order to demystify the wide spectrum of Zinfandel's aromas and flavors, and to provide a helpful vocabulary for tasters, ZAP commissioned UC Davis Professor Ann Noble to create a Zinfandel Aroma Wheel in 1993. In the Aroma Wheel, characteristics are divided into additional areas, like floral and nutty, with fruit descriptors that include cranberry, strawberry, black currant, black cherry, and plum, among others. Rich styles of Zinfandel wines might have several layers of flavors, where a whiff of raspberry in the nose might deepen into cedar on the palate and then linger as a hint of chocolate at the finish. This universe of smell and taste from one grape is one of the many reasons for Zinfandel's popularity and appeal to all types of wine drinkers.

REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The character of a Zinfandel, like that of any fine wine, is largely determined by the *terroir*, or taste of the soil, in which the grapes are grown. In 19th century America, Zinfandel growers had an opportunity rare in viticultural history: the chance to try planting in numerous and varied sites, thus identifying the sites to which the Zinfandel grape was most suited.

Ideally, Zinfandel is dry-farmed in exceptional locations, using a special trellising system that allows for light penetration and airflow. Zinfandel requires a long growing season with a preference for a warm but not excessively hot growing region. “Hang time,” or the amount of time grapes stay on the vine to ripen before harvest, is carefully monitored to ensure the delicate balance between acid, tannin and sugar. The characteristics of the wine will vary from region to region, but there is a constant with most Zinfandels: a rich, up-front core of fruit, exotic spice, and an unmistakable white or black pepper note that is not just a taste, but a sensation. For more information and maps of the Zinfandel growing regions of California, see pages 14–22 of this guide.

STYLES

Zinfandel is a great wine tasting experience, because of its diversity of styles. Most of today’s red *Zinfandel table wine* is produced from grapes picked at the optimum balance of sugar and acid to yield wines with 13–14% alcohol. Extended skin contact during fermentation and aging in fine oak barrels generally produces wines with an intensely fruity character, plus the balance and complexity expected of fine wines. *Blush wines* are produced from red Zinfandel grapes whose juice is separated from the skins and seeds after crushing, and is then fermented like a white wine. *Light, spicy, berry-flavored red wines* are produced from less mature red Zinfandel grapes that receive little or no barrel aging. *Bigger, rounder, richer Zinfandels* contain alcohol in the 14–15% range and are normally produced from very ripe to slightly overripe grapes. These wines are full of jammy extract in both bouquet and flavor. *Late Harvest Zinfandel* is produced from very overripe grapes, yielding unusually concentrated wines with an alcohol content of over 15–17%, sometimes with noticeable residual sugar. *Zinfandel Port* is a fortified wine usually produced from mature or very ripe grapes.

TASTING

The producers are as individualistic as the wine itself, and just as approachable, so we encourage you to experiment with their many styles of wine, made from this multi-faceted, food-friendly grape. This may mean sampling wines from certain regions, certain wineries, certain vintages, or even Zinfandel blended with other grapes, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah, or Carignane. And it certainly will mean tasting Zinfandel with a variety of foods, from the traditional leg of lamb to chocolate cake! In this Resource Guide, you’ll find information to help give you a sense of place and style which should enhance your enjoyment of the increasingly complex and pleasurable world of Zinfandel.

Zinfandel is famous for the delicious richness of its fruit, and certainly this characteristic is never stronger than when a wine is young. But for those with the requisite grapes and the desire to do so, Zinfandel can be crafted—with the proper balance, intensity and structure—to yield a wine that grows in integration and complexity, both retaining and enveloping its notable berry and spice core in silken layers of multidimensional delight.

— Jerry Seps, Storybook Vineyards



ZINFANDEL ADVOCATES & PRODUCERS: ZAP

Why was ZAP organized? What is its purpose?

Our goals from the beginning were to bring together those who were dedicated to Zinfandel, knowledgeable about its virtues and willing to spread the word, and to coordinate, perpetuate and/or promulgate writings and events that served to accent the many positive aspects of Zinfandel. ZAP has obviously grown much beyond the dreams of its first adherents, but, fortunately, not moved far from its original purpose.

— Jerry Seps, *Storybook Vineyards*



Founded in 1991 by Jerry Seps as the first President, along with Buck Cobb (Karly Wines), Jamie Lewis (Fetzer Vineyards), Mike Loykasek (Meeker Vineyard), Joel Peterson (Ravenswood Winery), Donn Reisen (Ridge Vineyards), and Kent Rosenblum (Rosenblum Cellars), ZAP is dedicated to the belief that there is no finer wine than Zinfandel, rivaling the best the world has to offer, and that the Zinfandel grape is unique in the nature and quality of its fruit, drinkable and enjoyable as a young wine, but also possessing the ability to age gracefully and well. ZAP has remained focused on educating the public about Zinfandel grown in America and bringing together increasing numbers of Zinfandel advocates.

Zinfandel Advocates & Producers is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit association which organizes seminars, educational programs, and tastings at wineries and other settings across the United States to explain the uniqueness of the Zinfandel grape. ZAP has over 300 “Producer” members, wineries and growers of Zinfandel, and more than 5,000 “Advocates,” consumers from across the country who are not in the wine business.

The essence of ZAP is its membership. ZAP is all about bringing together Zinfandel enthusiasts or those just beginning to indulge in the splendor of Zinfandel. Members come from all walks of life—educators, students, professionals, wine drinkers, wine collectors, and those who just love Zinfandel! ZAP members are united in their appreciation of Zinfandel and the desire to learn more about it.

ZAP was founded to raise awareness for Zinfandel made as a fine red wine. By building on a solid base of committed supporters, it has been wildly successful.

— *Paul Draper & Donn Reisen, Ridge Vineyards*

Zinfandel was the underdog with a cause. We knew the great friends and camaraderie Zinfandel inspired. There was a great need to spread the word and the heritage of Zinfandel, thus ZAP was born of 22 proud parents.

— *Kent Rosenblum, Rosenblum Cellars*

How does Zinfandel Advocates & Producers assist in researching Zinfandel and educating the public about Zinfandel?

ZAP hosts an Annual Zinfandel Festival, including a Grand Zinfandel Tasting of all of its producer-members' wines, which is one of the largest tastings of its kind in the world! ZAP organizes seminars and tastings around the country, conducts international tastings in Europe and Canada, and produces a University of Zin cruise each year hosting a Zinfandel Master Class. Throughout the wine regions of California, ZAP producer-members invite advocates to come to their wineries to learn more about their wines. ZAP assisted in the creation of the Heritage Vineyard, and has continued to support its ongoing research with over \$350,000 in grant money raised from ZAP's annual Evening with the Winemakers Benefit Dinner and Auction. This may be the largest grant ever to come from an independent organization focused on one specific wine grape varietal. ZAP also promotes the continuing research surrounding the origins and history of the Zinfandel grape. Above all, ZAP acts as a resource, connecting the Zinfandel community around the world. ZinWorld, found at the website: zinfandel.org, serves as ZAP's comprehensive resource center and online social networking site for wineries, growers, and advocates.



ZINFANDEL HERITAGE



What is the Heritage Vineyard?

The Heritage Vineyard is an unusual and unprecedented collection of cuttings from rare and famous Zinfandel vineyards throughout California. A research team consisting of UC Davis Extension Specialist Dr. James Wolpert, UC Extension Viticulturist Emeritus Amand Kasimatis, and UC Extension Farm Advisors began Zinfandel “safaris” in 1989, searching for vineyards planted before 1930. They brought back cuttings from 14 California counties including: Sonoma, Mendocino, Napa, Contra Costa, San Luis Obispo, San Joaquin, Lake, Amador, El Dorado, Calaveras, Alameda, Santa Cruz, San Bernardino, and Riverside.

The Heritage Vineyard was originally established at the UC Davis Oakville Research Station in Napa Valley, California. During the first phase of the project in 1995, 63 selections were planted, with an additional 27 selections added in 1999, for a total of 90 selections. The vines were grafted onto St. George rootstock with a spacing of 9 feet by 8 feet. Each vine has been head-trained and spur-pruned in the “goblet” shape as they would have been in the nineteenth century. These practices ensure a high quality

but low yield, and so are not typically used today. The Heritage Vineyard demands authenticity, however. “We need to replicate the conditions which have given Zinfandel its reputation,” explains Wolpert, who directs the Heritage Vineyard research.

Phase 1 of the comprehensive research into old-vine Zinfandel has moved into a new phase. Of the 90 selections in the Heritage Vineyard, 20 were tested, certified to be virus free, and were advanced into Phase 2 for additional testing. Second phase plantings were implemented to allow production of a barrel of wine from each selection. In 2004, Ravenswood Winery began making separate small-lot wines from Phase 2’s first harvest. The wines and vine data continue to be compared to determine what variations exist between selections. Eventually, some of these selections will be released to nurseries for propagation and general distribution to growers.

“The Heritage Vineyard is a vibrant ‘ongrowing’ museum of the grape,” Wolpert says. “The Vineyard is of tremendous historical and viticultural interest to those fascinated by Zinfandel,” he adds. “For the consumer, the vineyard is living history and provides an easily accessible

It's our responsibility as vineyardists, winemakers, craftsmen, and "keepers of the flame," that we seek out the purest and finest quality clones of Zinfandel in California, isolate them, nurture them, study them, and then possibly make them available commercially on a large scale, all to ensure that Zinfandel moves into the next millennium in its most superb incarnation.

— Doug Beckett,
Peachy Canyon Winery

demonstration of where Zinfandel is really made—in the vineyard. For the wine industry, it has special significance because it represents a resource for future plantings of Zinfandel with a broad range of selections.”

“We continue to learn much about the viticultural characteristics of these vines,” Wolpert continues. “Things such as berry size, cluster tightness, and ripening uniformity are all factors which have an impact on the quality of the vintage. Of course, the most important factor is wine quality which integrates all of these components, including color, tannin profile, and intensity of varietal character.”

In 1997, the first wine was made from the Vineyard, and each year, a different winemaker is selected to make the Heritage Vineyard Zinfandel, blending the grapes harvested from the Heritage Vineyard in his/her own personal winemaking style. These vintages are available for sale at ZAP’s Annual Zinfandel Festival, with the proceeds benefiting future Zinfandel education and research.

ZAP’S COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH

As of 2009, ZAP’s cumulative contribution to support the Heritage Vineyard Project has passed the \$350,000 milestone. “This is easily the largest grant coming from an independent organization focused on one specific wine-grape varietal,” Wolpert says. “This research will potentially have more impact on the improvement of Zinfandel than any other study done at UC Davis. I am very grateful to ZAP because without its advice, involvement, and financial support, this trial would not be possible,” he adds.

The Heritage Vineyard brings all of us together as scientists, farmers, artists, and historians. Ultimately, this research will help us discover answers to some of the mysteries surrounding Zinfandel, and preserve the special qualities of the old vines for future generations.

— Rebecca Robinson,
Executive Director, ZAP



ZINFANDEL IN AMERICA

- 1822-1829** Long Island nursery owner George Gibbs imports several grapevines from the Imperial collection in Vienna, one of which was Zinfandel.
- 1832** Boston nursery owner Samuel Perkins advertises the “Zinfendal” vine for sale.
- 1835-1845** “Zinfindal” becomes a popular table grape in the Northeast, grown under glass.
- 1846** New England viticulture expert J. F. Allen describes Zinfandel in his *Practical Treatise on the Culture of the Grape*, America’s first scholarly book on viticulture.
- 1852-1857** Frederick Macondray from Massachusetts and other California nursery owners introduce the Zinfandel vines to California. After the gold rush in California, Zinfandel is widely planted because it grows abundantly as a head-pruned vine.
- 1859** Zinfandel introduced to Sonoma and Napa by J.W. Osborne and William Boggs.
- 1859-1863** Zinfandel discovered to be an excellent variety for red table wine in the Sonoma and Santa Clara Valleys, and the Sierra Foothills.
- 1865-1870** The spelling of “Zinfindal” is somehow agreed to be “Zinfandel.”
- 1870-1878** Zinfandel becomes popular throughout northern California.
- 1878-1889** Zinfandel is the most widely planted variety during California’s first wine boom.
- 1883-1885** Arpad Haraszthy’s claim that his father Agoston introduced Zinfandel to California is accepted by most writers after a heated debate. This claim holds until the 1970’s when disproved by modern research on the subject.
- 1890-1900** Most of northern California’s vineyards are destroyed by phylloxera. Some Zinfandel vines survive because they were planted on resistant rootstock or are isolated from the disease.
- 1900-1912** California vineyards are replanted. Zinfandel is the leading varietal in the production of red table wines. Italian immigrant families take a lead in growing and making Zinfandel.
- 1919-1933** During Prohibition, wine as a commercial beverage is illegal. Zinfandel remains popular among home winemakers. Zinfandel is one of the top five varietals produced.
- 1933-1960** Zinfandel continues to be an important varietal in most California red table wines. Some wineries produce outstanding premium Zinfandel wines.
- 1960-1975** A sturdy, well-structured style of Zinfandel becomes popular.
- 1967** While visiting Bari in southern Italy, University of California at Davis Researcher Austin Goheen tastes a wine known locally as Primitivo, recognizing the vines’ similarity to Zinfandel.
- 1973** White Zinfandel is born, as California wineries begin to draw free-run juice from Zinfandel grapes, fermenting it as “white” wine.
- 1976** Zinfandel-related research findings are announced at the American Society of Enology & Viticulture Conference: 1) Wade Wolfe shows that Primitivo is probably the same varietal as Zinfandel, and 2) Charles Sullivan traces the evolution of Zinfandel from New England to California.
- 1978-1985** Many wineries begin to take a fine-wine approach to Zinfandel winemaking. White Zinfandel becomes popular.
- 1983** Leon Adams is the first to suggest that the Plavac Mali grape of Croatia may be related to Zinfandel.
- 1985-1998** Zinfandel enjoys renewed popularity as a varietal-designate.
- 1989** UC Davis Specialist Dr. James Wolpert, University of California Extension Viticulturist Emeritus Amand Kasimatis, Napa County Farm Advisor Ed Weber, and Sonoma County Farm Advisor Rhonda Smith, begin traveling on Old Vine Zinfandel “safaris,” searching for vineyards planted before 1930.

- 1990-1998** Zinfandel vineyards in California grow from a total of 34,000 acres to more than 50,000 acres, establishing Zinfandel once more as California's number one red wine varietal, as it was 100 years earlier.
- 1991** *Angels' Visits: An Inquiry into the Mystery of Zinfandel*, by David Darlington, is the first book entirely dedicated to the subject of Zinfandel. In March of 1991, Jerry Seps from Storybook Vineyards, invites producer colleagues to celebrate and promote Zinfandel, forming the Zinfandel Advocates & Producers (ZAP). The Wine Institute and the wine industry recognize ZAP as Zinfandel's official promotional organization.
- 1993** ZAP supports creation of the Zinfandel Aroma Wheel, researched and developed by UC Davis Professor Ann Noble.
- 1994** Zinfandel Advocates & Producers establishes a nonprofit educational 501(c)(3) organization to advance public knowledge of America's "heritage wine" and its unique place in American culture and history. UC Davis Professor Carole Meredith confirms by DNA fingerprinting that Zinfandel and Primitivo grapes have the same DNA structure.
- 1995** Wolpert begins planting vines from his Zinfandel "safaris" in the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard, Phase 1, at the UC Davis Experimental Station in Oakville, Napa Valley. The one-acre vineyard, with bale clay loam soils, contains 7 vines each from 63 different Zinfandel vineyards from Sonoma, Mendocino, Contra Costa, San Luis Obispo, San Joaquin, and Napa Counties.
- 1998** ZAP begins funding the research for the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard, Phase 1. San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown cuts the ribbon to open the 7th Annual Zinfandel Tasting in San Francisco, attracting 5,000 attendees and acclaimed as the "World's Largest Tasting of One Varietal."
- 1999** ZAP releases the first vintage from the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard, Phase 1, produced from the 1997 harvest.
- 2001** ZAP celebrates its 10th Anniversary. The Annual Zinfandel Festival Tasting draws over 9,000 worldwide participants. ZAP travels to Europe for the first time, visiting London, Amsterdam, and Dusseldorf. The Heritage Vineyard launches Phase 2, including 20 different clones from Phase 1.
- 2002** Meredith and her colleagues publish the discovery that Zinfandel and the Croatian grape Crljenak Kaštelanski have the same DNA structure. ZAP sponsors the first of its kind "Zinposium," an international conference entirely devoted to Zinfandel.
- 2004** Ravenswood Winery successfully produces separate small-lot wines from the first harvest of the Phase 2 Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard for study and analysis.
- 2005** San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom declares Zinfandel Grape Appreciation Week in San Francisco during the 14th Annual Zinfandel Festival.
- 2006** ZAP celebrates its 15th Anniversary. The California Legislature designates Zinfandel as California's Official Historic Wine. The last wine from the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard, Phase 1 is released.
- 2007** The first wine from the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard, Phase 2 is released.
- 2008** ZAP and UC Davis expand the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard efforts to different California regions. Producers volunteer to replicate the current research design of the Phase 2 at their own locations creating the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard Project, Phase 3.
- 2009** ZAP's cumulative contribution to support the Heritage Vineyard Project passes the \$350,000 milestone. The Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard Project releases the first virus-free certified Zinfandel selections to commercial nurseries.

ZINFANDEL GROWING REGIONS: CALIFORNIA



Zinfandel has been planted in virtually all the grape growing areas of California, in the widest possible variety of soils and topography, and in climates from coldest to hottest. After more than a century of experimentation, the eight regions mapped on these pages appear to be the predominant sites.

However, as Cathleen Francisco wrote in her Zinfandel reference guide, “The attempt at defining growing regions for consumer identification is very broad and simplistic as it does not address the internal diversity of each appellation or vineyard site. It is comparable to the generalities one finds in defining a group of people.”

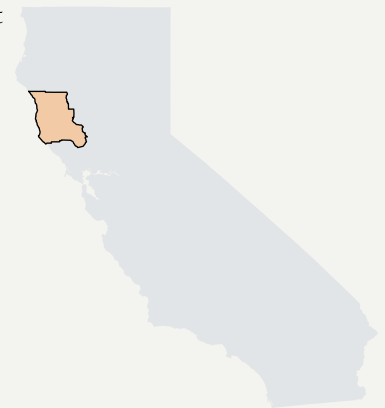
To further our educational goals, ZAP has identified these California growing areas to represent, in a broad sense, the styles of Zinfandel produced in each of the selected regions, considering that there is a diversity of style by appellation within each region.

MENDOCINO & LAKE REGIONS

This is considered to be California’s wine growing frontier, filled with the homesteads of many family wineries. Mendocino County’s southern border is north of San Francisco, immediately north of Sonoma County. Lake County is located southeast of Mendocino County. Bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west and covered in great part by the rugged Coastal Range, this is a warmer growing region than its northerly location would suggest. The warmth is due to the mountain ranges that shelter interior valleys from the cool ocean breezes.

American Viticultural Areas within this region include Anderson Valley, Benmore Valley, Clear Lake, Cole Ranch, Guenoc Valley, McDowell Valley, Mendocino, Mendocino Ridge, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Red Hills, and Yorkville Highlands. Some Zinfandel is also grown in Trinity and Tehama Counties to the north of this region, which include the Willow Creek appellation.

Zinfandels from Mendocino and Lake Counties are richly colored and are notable for their distinct raspberry-cherry character. These wines have a rather juicy feel in the mouth. Commonly noted aromas include rose petal, vanilla, forest floor, mulled spice, and chocolate, with flavors of berries, black cherry, baking spice, plum, dark chocolate, and black pepper.



SIERRA FOOTHILLS REGION

Located east of Sacramento in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, this region includes Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer, Tuolumne, and Yuba Counties. Its colorful Gold Rush tales and long agricultural history make this a fascinating

Zinfandel area to explore. Some of the earliest documented Zinfandel vineyards were planted here between 1852 and 1869, and some still survive today, protected by their remote locations. Vineyards in the Sierra Foothills possess unique decomposed granite soils that are found nowhere else in the world. Nearly all of the Zinfandel vineyards here are at fairly high elevation (from 1,200 to 3,500 feet) which places them above the fog and gives access to sunshine.

The American Viticultural Areas within this region are California Shenandoah Valley, El Dorado, Fairplay, Fiddletown, North Yuba, and Sierra Foothills.

Grapes tend to be picked later here than in coastal regions, so the wines are deeply colored, with bright forward fruit, jammy, ripe black raspberry flavors, and a strong black cherry, verging on cola, character. There is an intensity of color, aroma, tannin, and flavor. Aromas are often described as cocoa, briary spice, licorice, mint, chocolate, cedar, and tobacco. Calaveras Zinfandels feature leathery aromas and flavors of cherry and plum, while Amador County wines tend to feature black cherry, black pepper, and anise, with a rich, round, full mouth. El Dorado County Zinfandels show a distinctive claret style that is unique to their growing area.



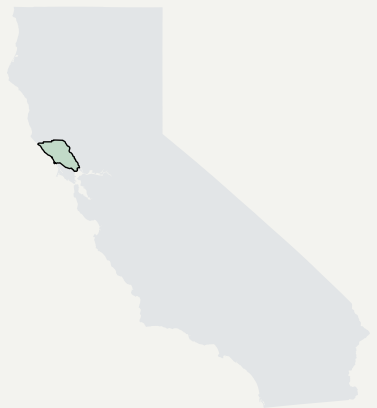
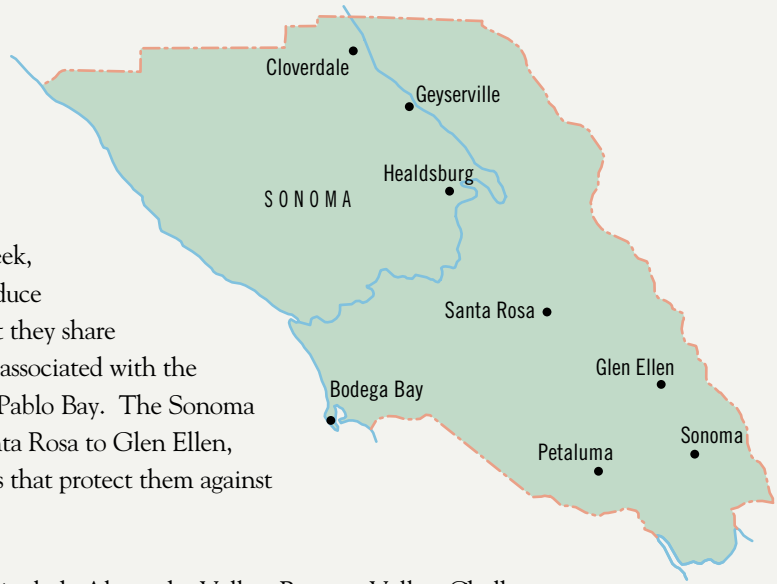
SONOMA COUNTY REGION

Sonoma County lies north of San Francisco and is bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean. The county runs parallel to Napa Valley, and is separated from it by the Mayacamas range.

Areas in Northern Sonoma such as the Dry Creek, Alexander, and Russian River Valleys each produce Zinfandel grapes with unique characteristics, yet they share the common link of warm days and cool nights associated with the marine influence of the Pacific Ocean and San Pablo Bay. The Sonoma Valley, which extends along Route 12 from Santa Rosa to Glen Ellen, has 100-year-old vines with deep-rooted systems that protect them against warm temperatures and early ripening.

Sonoma County’s American Viticultural Areas include Alexander Valley, Bennett Valley, Chalk Hill, Dry Creek Valley, Knights Valley, Los Carneros, Northern Sonoma, Rockpile, Russian River Valley, Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County Green Valley, Sonoma Mountain, and Sonoma Valley.

Zinfandel from Sonoma County has been generally characterized as having full, intense blackberry fruit aromas that mingle with spicy black pepper, anise, and allspice scents. In general, Northern Sonoma produces “classic Zinfandel,” with some cherry and briar character. The extended growing season of the Russian River Valley intensifies the flavors in the fruit, producing very lush, dark plum and boysenberry qualities. Zinfandel from Dry Creek has a distinct core of black cherry and vanilla flavor and aroma, and Zinfandel from Alexander Valley tends to be described as “supple” with plump blackberry and black cherry flavors. As the Sonoma Valley is a slightly cooler region, these wines are quite lush and feature plenty of black pepper and spice. The coolest areas of Southern Sonoma show brighter, rounder berry fruit and an intensely spicy flavor.



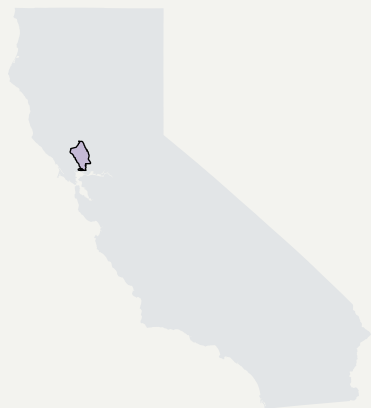
NAPA VALLEY REGION



Napa Valley runs parallel with Sonoma Valley and to the east. This 40-mile long valley, which stretches in a northwesterly direction from the city of Napa in the south to Calistoga in the north, is considered one of the most diverse growing regions in California. Over 30 different soils have been identified here, including soils of alluvial, volcanic and maritime origin, ranging from well-drained gravelly loams to moisture-retaining silty clay. This diverse group of soils and exposures, as well as three different climate zones, provide a variety of distinctive grape growing environments. Zinfandel vineyards are spread from well drained, rich, red clay loam hillsides to gravelly benchlands on the valley floor.

The many American Viticultural Areas in Napa Valley include Atlas Peak, Chiles Valley, Diamond Mountain, Howell Mountain, Los Carneros, Mt. Veeder, Napa Valley, Oak Knoll, Oakville, Rutherford, St. Helena, Spring Mountain, Stags Leap, Wild Horse Valley, and Yountville.

These diverse areas produce very well structured wines, notable both for their aging potential, finesse, and complexity, and for their intriguing flavors and aromas of raspberries/black raspberries. Winemakers have described the aromas of Napa Valley Zinfandel as complex, with a bouquet of ripe currants, vanilla, and orange zest, with a distinct cedar character; flavor descriptors include blackberry and currant, black cherry, and briary fruit with black pepper spice.



CENTRAL COAST REGION

The Central Coast Region includes the Zinfandel growing areas of Monterey County, San Luis Obispo County (including Paso Robles), Edna Valley, and Santa Barbara. Each of these areas contains vineyards that share the effects of coastal breezes, which moderate the warmth of the summer and early fall. Most of the soil here is rocky and gravelly. Zinfandel was first planted in the Central Coast by the mid-1880's, and the region has a long history of winemaking dating back to the advent of the missionaries in the 18th century.

The American Viticultural Areas of Arroyo Grande Valley, Arroyo Seco, Carmel Valley, Central Coast, Chalone, Cienega Valley, Edna Valley, Hames Valley, Lime Kiln Valley, Monterey, Mt. Harlan, Pacheco Pass, Paicines, Paso Robles, San Benito, San Bernabe, San Lucas, Santa Lucia Highlands, Santa Maria Valley, Santa Rita Hills, Santa Ynez Valley, and York Mountain are all found within the Central Coast region.

Wines from this region exhibit rich, fruity character, from big, late harvest style wines to more forward, lighter, claret style Zinfandels which include notes of spice, herbs, and cherries. These are rich wines, with intense blackberry and pepper, and the earthy quality of the fragrant forest floor. Wild berries, smoke, and toast are some of the more unique descriptors used for the aromas of Central Coast Zinfandel, and flavors commonly cited are cranberries, raspberries, sage, and spice.



CENTRAL VALLEY REGION

The Central Valley Region American Viticultural Areas stretch from Colusa County in the north to Madera County in the south and include Clarksburg, Diablo Grande, Dunnigan Hills, Green Valley, Lodi, Madera, Meritt Island, River Junction, Salado Creek, Seiad Valley, Solano County, and Suisun Valley. Lodi, where the preponderance of the Zinfandel plantings are located, stretches into the Sierra Nevada, and the rocky, shallow terrain of these foothills provides a good site for Zinfandel. The Mokolumne and Consumnes Rivers provide abundant, mineral-rich water, and the area's sandy clay loam soil has been deposited in the floodplains by the Sierras for millions of years. The soils are sandy and well-drained in most of the region. The combination of these soils, the ideal climate of warm days, and the cool breezes off the San Joaquin River

Delta that bring down evening temperatures. create soft, approachable Zinfandels with rich, lush fruit character. Records show plantings of Zinfandel in this region as early as 1858.

Small amounts of Zinfandel are also grown in Glenn, Butte, Kings, Tulare, and Kern Counties.

Winemakers have described the aromas of Central Valley Zinfandel as showing notes of spicy cherry liqueur, pie cherries, clove, and nutmeg. The most common flavor descriptors are ripe blueberries, cranberry, dried plum, toasted almond, and pepper. Central Valley wines tend toward soft, low tannins.



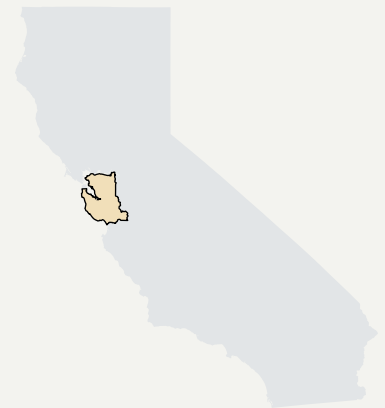
BAY AREA REGION

This is a radically diverse area, both in its geography and proximity to the ocean, creating a variety of microclimates. This widely varied region includes the Livermore Valley and Contra Costa County to the east of San Francisco and the Santa Cruz Mountains and Santa Clara Valley to the south.

The style and character of the cool climate wines from the Santa Cruz Mountains differ from those grown in the warmer vineyards of the Livermore and Santa Clara Valleys. Most vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains are planted in upper elevations and are not irrigated. The cooling ocean influence, as well as the well-drained soils of the area, yield densely extracted, spicy fruit. The Livermore Valley experiences early morning fog from San Francisco Bay, followed by warm, sunny days, and cool evenings when the fog is blown back into the valley and held there by the surrounding mountains. Soil here is rocky and well drained. Contra Costa County, about 50 miles east of San Francisco, is also dominated by rocky, well drained soil, and there are still a few century old vineyards in this area. Zinfandels from this growing area tend to be rich and soft with intense plum and cherry flavors.

The American Viticultural Areas of the Bay Area are Ben Lomond Mountain, Livermore, San Francisco Bay, San Ysidro District, Santa Clara Valley, and Santa Cruz Mountains.

Descriptors of Bay Area wines often include aromas of rich black cherry and spicy herbs, with elements of bramble, cassia, licorice, and chocolate. These wines can show ripe black cherry, black currant and blackberries, with hints of hazelnuts, bacon, currant, plums, and creamy vanilla.



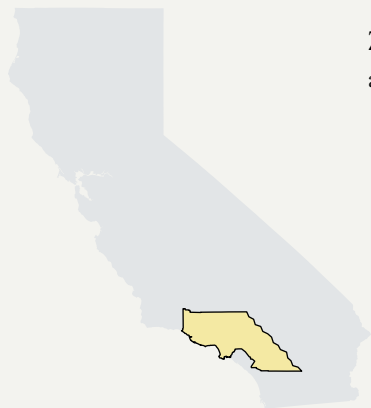
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION



This region is extremely important historically, as it was once the center of California winemaking, when missionaries planted their first vineyard at Mission San Diego in 1769. In the Cucamonga Valley, near Los Angeles, the warm climate and sandy soil is well-suited to Zinfandel, but agricultural use of the land has given way in part to profitable urban development. To the south, the unique microclimate of Temecula is aided by its 1,500-foot elevation. Temecula's Zinfandel vineyards bask in the renowned Southern California sun during the day, but the elevation brings cool afternoon and evening breezes.

The Cucamonga Valley, Malibu-Newton Canyon, San Pasqual Valley, South Coast, and Temecula American Viticultural Areas are all part of this southernmost region.

Zinfandel wines from the Southern California Region tend to flavors of very ripe fruit, dried fruit, and peppery spice, and they are highly aromatic, with a bouquet that is consistent with their flavors.



FOOD

How do you match Zinfandel with food? The answer to this question, of course, depends upon the style of Zinfandel.

A bowl of creamy-sauced pasta is a great partner with robust red Zinfandel. So is a juicy steak or an elegant roast, slathered with barbecue sauce or dusted with an herb rub. There are those who make sure they hoard some Zinfandel, particularly Late Harvest Zinfandel or Zinfandel Port, to enjoy with dessert, especially if it is deep, dark chocolate cake. Zinfandels of all styles would pair well with an assortment of cheeses, flexible enough to complement a cheese course in the European style or a platter of cheeses and crackers before a football game.

Fresh goat, aged Gouda, Parmesan, or cheddar — each one will become magic with the Zinfandel in your glass in a different way. And lighter Zinfandel styles make an interesting pairing with the exotic flavors of Asian or Latin foods.

The true aficionado will enjoy tasting different styles of Zinfandel from wine regions around the state with various cuisines. There are no rules—Zinfandel is a wine that is made for pure pleasure, so drink what you like. Zinfandel, in all its diversity, is just as comfortable at an elegant dinner party as at casual family meals.



Zinofiles are so obsessed with quality we can't see straight. It's the Rocky story of the wine industry.

Indeed, this once-dying California grape has gained worldwide acclaim in recent years. The newly popular red version of Zinfandel has simultaneously stirred the souls of its fans, a dressed-down group of self-described anti-snobs, unpretentious in demeanor but relentless in their determination to promote Zinfandel as America's grape.

— Amy Shipley, Journalist

SELECTED RESOURCES

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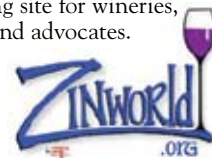
CHAIRS, HERITAGE VINEYARD PROJECT

Joel Peterson
Ravenswood Winery

Paul Draper
Ridge Vineyards

ZINWORLD

ZAP's comprehensive resource center and online social networking site for wineries, growers, and advocates.



Current contact information
for all resources—
Website: zinfandel.org

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