



# *The Perfect Project*

## **A Joint Venture Between UC Davis and ZAP**

By Rich Hoffman—Zin-4-Ever

You have heard it before: "the perfect storm"—that once in a lifetime, once in a century time when all the variables and ingredients come together to form: "the perfect whatever." ZAP, the producers and advocates (that's us) and the University of California at Davis, with their staff and wonderful Experimental Station in Oakville, Napa County, along with 90 "old vine" cuttings from all over California formed the ingredients that came together to form: "the perfect project."

The Heritage Vineyard is a project supported by ZAP. (By the way, ZAP now has over 280 producers, and yes, over 6,000 advocates.) The research includes the identification, planting, promotion and scholarly preservation of 90 "old vine" Zinfandels which were chosen from 14 counties throughout California. Each of the 90 selections has seven vines planted on a one-acre plot of 20 acres that comprise the UC Davis experimental vineyard in Oakville. The Experimental Station and Heritage Vineyard are nestled between Robert Mondavi Vineyards and Far Niente Winery—a world famous area called the "Rutherford Bench" and includes such famous neighbors as Martha's Vineyard. The one-acre plot will be enlarged to over two acres in the near future to expand the study and increase production of the Heritage wine.

Since 1998, ZAP has allocated almost \$70,000 for this worthwhile research project that will potentially have more impact on Zinfandel grown in America than any other study done at UC Davis or anywhere else for that matter. The project includes documenting legacies of the selected vines, their viticultural histories in the vineyard and, we hope, help to answer some of the mysteries surrounding Zinfandel, thus helping preserve the special qualities of the "old vines" for future generations. Don't forget that these "old vines" are planted as they were planted in the 19th century—head trained and spur pruned.

We as advocates and producers can feel mighty proud to be sponsors of this glorious

union—a once in a lifetime project! Where better than this joint venture should our money and efforts go? Every ZAPper from Washington State to Florida, California to Maine, and all areas in-between should feel great pride in this "perfect project."

On Saturday, June 16, 2001 the working volunteers of the 10th Annual Zinfandel Festival 2001 were brought together for the 6th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Day Picnic at the Heritage Vineyard in Oakville and Sutter Home's Zinfandel Ranch on (you guessed it) Zinfandel Lane in the Napa Valley. Our own Rich Flores, Director-at-Large and Treasurer of ZAP (he signs the checks—he's my friend) directed a vertical of '98 and '99 vintages and barrel samples of the 2000 from the Heritage Vineyard. Discussions featured Robert Biale, winemaker of the '98 vintage, Matt Cline, winemaker of the '99 vintage, and Rod Berglund, winemaker of the 2000 vintage, along with Jim Wolpert, Viticulture and Enology Department chair.

So, ZAPpers the world over, you heard it from us first! Part of our dues and efforts, and surely, our hearts, have gone into this glorious effort. Feel proud. Be proud of your involvement and the hard work by the staff at UC Davis underway at the Experimental Station. Stand tall and hold your glass of America's National Treasure high for Zinfandel, in all aspects, is in the capable hands of "the perfect project!"

*ZAP extends a hearty ZAP Cheer to Rich for his continuing contributions.*

### **ZAP Awards \$40,200 to the UC Davis Heritage Vineyard**

Research includes development of a new Zinfandel Vineyard in Oakville

Watch for a complete report in the October *Express*.