



There Is No Such Thing As A White Zinfandel Grape!

Because we love Zinfandel, the first quarter we have selected three Zinfandels—each from a different appellation.

Zinfandel is a red grape, and up until 1998, it was the most widely planted grape in California! Even though we don't carry white zinfandel in our store, we acknowledge that the popularity of that wine was largely responsible for the notoriety of the Zinfandel grape. Although there is still much controversy concerning the origins of the Zinfandel grape, the B.A.T.F. recognizes Zinfandel as a truly American grape. A professor from U.C. Davis claims that the DNA from Zinfandel and the Plavic Mali grape from Croatia are identical. No matter which group you subscribe to, Zinfandel is a terrific tasting wine—period, end of sentence.

An interesting controversy regarding Zinfandel is the term “Old Vine”. Largely used as a marketing term, there is absolutely no legal definition as to how many years old a vine has to be to be defined as “Old Vine”. In fact many wine producers use young vines to make Zin and are convinced that young vines make better wine. Young vines typically produce vibrant, lively wine. On the other hand, wine makers who use “Old Vines” are certain that “Old Vines” make the best Zin. Although the yields become much lower as the vines age, some producers know that the fruit is more intense with older vines.

Zinfandel is a rugged grape, grows in very hot climates, and is more resistant to disease than several other grape varieties. In a bunch of Zinfandel grapes, some of the grapes will be very ripe while some may still be hard and not ripe at all. This is why many of the better producers actually hand sort the grapes after they are harvested to ensure that the grapes they use in their wines are completely ripe and full of flavor. The following is a list of common words used to describe some of the flavors in Zinfandel. Feel free to create your own list of descriptors as well.

Common descriptors for Zinfandels are:

Berry—cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, strawberry jam, blackberry, blackberry jam, blueberry/huckleberry, boysenberry, and black currant

Cherry/Plum—Royal Anne cherry, black cherry, bing cherry, plum, prune, raisin, rhubarb

Spicy—cinnamon, clove, allspice, anise, black pepper, nutmeg, cardamom

Other: _____

Other: _____

Five Reasons why PlumpJack loves Zinfandel:

1. Good Zins can be juicy, rich, spicy, elegant, complex, age-worthy, jammy, or rustic.
2. Food versatility – yes, Zin is perfect with lamb, lasagna, pizza and more.
3. Many Zins are ready to drink upon release.
4. A bottle of Zinfandel, a pizza, and watching the tube on Fridays is the perfect beginning for a great weekend.
5. It's delicious and affordable.

2001 Robert Hall – Paso Robles \$22.99

Here are the facts:

Location of Winery:	Paso Robles in the Central Coast area
Owners:	Robert Hall and Margaret Burrell
Vineyards:	300 acres planted/all are estate wines
Climate:	Hot temperatures, with cool breezes from the coast
Approximate age of vines:	57 years
Cases produced:	684 cases
Winemaker:	Don Brady
Alcohol:	14.7%
Tasting Profile:	Raspberry and peppery aromas, burgundy color; bright robust fruit with spicy flavors; hearty and medium-to full-bodied with a round soft finish
Food pairings:	Hearty beef stew or a spicy pasta dish
Aging Potential:	Drink now or hold for a couple of years
Fun Fact:	The subterranean caves at the Robert Hall Winery span 19,000 square feet, which is the largest underground cavern in California.

2000 Storybook Mountain Vineyards, Atlas Peak The First Hurrah, Napa Valley \$24.99

Here are the facts:

Location of Winery:	Northwest of Calistoga at the top of Napa Valley
Owners:	Jerry and Sigrid Seps
Vineyards:	405 acres
Single Vineyard:	Mead Ranch (Atlas Peak)
Climate:	Hot temperatures atop the Mayacamas Mountain, but cool breezes from the Russian River funnel in periodically.
Approximate age of vines:	100 + years
Cases produced:	329
Winemaker:	Jerry Seps
Alcohol:	14.5%
Tasting Profile:	Black cherry, blackberry flavors, juicy, medium-bodied, hints of exotic spices – cardamom and nutmeg; finish is round and spicy
Food pairings:	Fettuccine with Pesto or a Balboa Cheeseburger
Aging Potential:	Drink now
Fun Fact:	Ingrid and Jerry Seps bought the property in 1976, which two brothers Grimm had originally owned. Hence the name Storybook.

2001 Tin Barn Vineyards, Jensen Lane Vineyard, Russian River Valley \$26.99

Here are the facts:

Location of Winery:	East of Windsor in Sonoma County
Owners:	Michael Lancaster, Gray Fowler, and Carl Stewart
Vineyards:	12 acres
Single Vineyard:	Jensen Lane Vineyard
Climate:	Hot temperatures during the afternoon with cooling late day breezes due to its close proximity to the ocean
Approximate age of vines:	30 years
Cases produced:	403
Winemaker:	Michael Lancaster
Alcohol:	15.5%
Tasting Profile:	Blackberry, jammy, with hints of spice; full-bodied and complex with a lingering complex finish. Lively fruit
Food pairings:	Greek style lamb chops or spicy pizza
Aging Potential:	Drink now or hold for up to 5 years
Fun Fact:	This is just the second vintage from a rising star winery, and the wine is actually made in a “tin barn”.