

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S QUARTERLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY



STORE HOURS

A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm*

Food service begins at
11:30am daily

*No new member tastings
after 6pm

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Zinfandel – THE SURVIVOR VARIETAL



A lot of false information gets tossed out there regarding Zinfandel from those who know what they're talking about or those who believe they know what they are talking about. "It's originally from California, no it's from Italy... It's a different varietal from Italian Primitivo, no it's the same... White Zinfandel is made from a different varietal than red Zinfandel wines... It's only grown in California... It's not able to be grown in Monterey County... All of the old Zinfandel vines were pulled up long ago in California."

Let's start with the grape's origin. The varietal has been grown in California since the mid-1800s and is one of the state's oldest varietals. But the varietal is not native to California. It was brought to the state during the Gold Rush

days. It could have come from Italian immigrants, who knew the grape by a different name – Primitivo, named after the varietal's tendency to ripen earlier. (Yes, they are the same, and the varietal had been grown in Italy's Apulia region - the "heel" of the country - for at least a hundred years prior to its introduction to the New World).

But the grape is not native to Italy either. The varietal can be traced to what is now Croatia and is called either Crljenak Kastelanski or Tribidrag. And, it could have been brought to California by Austrian immigrants. They were familiar with the varietal as the Austro-Hungarian empire encompassed Croatia. The Austrians created a new name for the varietal, and that name is similar in appearance and pronunciation to Zinfandel.

Regardless of how it arrived in California, there is no doubt that once the varietal was here, it found a new home in a big way. Some of the oldest vines in the state are Zinfandel (planted in Amador, Lodi, and Napa). For a period in the 19th century, it's believed that Zinfandel was the most widely planted varietal in the state.

Zinfandel historically was used as a blending varietal. The grape was widely planted in large Central Valley vineyards and remains planted there to this day. Zinfandel continues to be used for mass production wines (in both red and pinkish form – see below) and is the third most widely planted varietal in the state after Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.

This represents roughly 80% of the planted Zinfandel in the state, leaving the remaining 20% to be grown as higher quality Zinfandel varietal wines and blends. But, of course, we can't not address the wine that those of the baby boomer generation most associate with Zinfandel.

White Zinfandel – the pinkish form of Zinfandel wine – is in fact produced from the same grape and accounts for around 10 percent of wine sales in the United States. Even though White Zin wines are considered to be more varietal driven and less sweet than in the past, these wines will always be considered in the non-serious wine category. However, it's due to the popularity of these blush wines that some of the old Zinfandel vines outside of the Central Valley were saved and not ripped out to plant other varietals.

These days, US producers are making a full spectrum of wines with the Zinfandel grape, ranging from blushes, lighter reds, huge hearty reds, and port-style fortified wines. The varietal is grown around the country, but is most prominent in Californian vineyards. Places like Amador, Lodi, Paso Robles, Napa, and Sonoma all produce exceptional Zinfandel wines, with each growing area often exhibiting differing varietal and terroir characteristics. And, yes, it is very possible to grow Zinfandel and produce excellent wines from the varietal in Monterey County. Joulilian, Mesa del Sol and Mission Trail Vineyards are currently producing Zinfandels that will match up to any in the state.

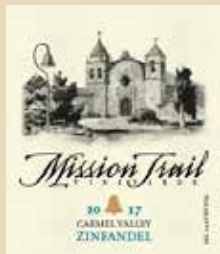
Speaking of wine styles, there are a few common Zinfandel flavor profiles. Zinfandel wines from cooler growing areas tend to have more red berry flavors such as raspberries and strawberries,



Continued Inside

RESERVE WINE SELECTIONS

MISSION TRAIL VINEYARD - 2017 Zinfandel



Winery: Nearly 230 years ago Franciscan friars planted wine grapes in Monterey County. Although these early vineyards are no longer around, they foretold the story of the thriving grape growing industry of today. Mission Trail Vineyards is dedicated to showcasing the promise that Monterey wine country has to offer. Only small lots of hand-crafted wines are produced. The grapes for these wines are selected from choice locations throughout Monterey County. Owners, Ken and Robyn, believe wine should be a reflection of the true varietal character with little man-made influences.

Tasting Notes: This wine possesses intense aromas of black cherry, rhubarb, leather and black and white pepper. The varietal true black cherry flavors on the palate give way to dark plum, blackberry, clove spice and cocoa. The extended barrel aging and cellar time has transformed this hearty and robust medium- to full-bodied wine into something that is incredibly elegant and silky. The tannin structure is refined and adequate, making for a very well balanced wine.

Mission Trail Vineyard
2017 Zinfandel

Alcohol
14.6%

AVA
Carmel Valley

Composition
100% Zinfandel

Aging Potential
8-10 years

MESA DEL SOL - 2013 Prima Rosso



Winery: Located on a beautiful upland promontory at the junction of three major watersheds, Mesa Del Sol has been a favorite location for more than a century. One small stone building, a water house, and a portion of one of the cabins date back to the 1800's and are believed to have been a stage stop for travelers headed overland to Carmel Valley or up the Arroyo Seco River to the Mission San Antonio. Around the turn of the century, a health center with various small cabins was developed. The hot

dry pure air of the Arroyo Seco Highlands became a soothing setting for those with tuberculosis and other maladies. Teddy Roosevelt was a visitor and stayed here during that time!

Vineyards: Lean rocky soils have been nurtured with organic farming practices where cover cropping and composting the fields provide a yearly dose of organic matter. The vines are irrigated from a thriving trout pond feeding them with living water. The hot arid days of the uplands and cool marine night air of the Pacific provide a perfect setting for nature to weave her magic.

Tasting Notes: Prima Rosso by name is a premium red wine blend, with a special combination of quality estate-grown fruit. Intricate structure, full-bodied, fun nose. Notes of pepper earthiness, anise, pomegranate and chocolate. Great with BBQ meats and spicy Asian food. Meant to be enjoyed now or cellar for up to 10 years

Mesa Del Sol
2013 Prima Rosso

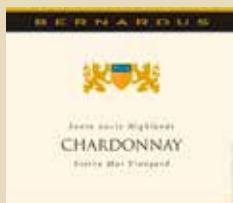
Alcohol
13.5%

AVA
Arroyo Seco

Composition
50% Zinfandel
25% Syrah
25% Sangiovese

Aging Potential
8-10 years

BERNARDUS - 2016 Soberanes Vineyard Chardonnay



Winery: The focus of Bernardus is to create wines that flatter the palate and stimulate the imagination. Their Marinus Estate Bordeaux-style red wine is the centerpiece of owner Ben Pon's dream. It is complemented by Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc from cool coastal climate vineyards. They also offer limited bottlings of small production and vineyard designate wines, which are available exclusively through the tasting room and wine club... taste a dream.

Vineyard: Santa Lucia Highlands' two most renowned growers, Gary Pisoni and Gary Francioni, have joined forces on an exciting vineyard located just south of the celebrated Garys' Vineyard in the heart of the Santa Lucia Highlands. It is called Soberanes Vineyard. Bernardus are honored to be among the few wineries to receive both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from this exciting star of the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation

Tasting Notes: The aromas of our 2016 Soberanes Chard exhibit fresh, ripe white fruits along with subtle toasty oak notes. Typical of this fine vineyard, the palate is very intense, with bright ripe fruit flavors supported by a rich, crisp finish.

Bernardus
2016 Soberanes
Vineyard Chardonnay

Alcohol
14.3%

AVA
Santa Lucia Highlands

Composition
100% Chardonnay

Aging Potential
5-6 years

Cover Article Continued



and warmer climate areas produce wines with pronounced blackberry, anise, and pepper aromas. Regardless of where produced, Zinfandel wines can be expected to be bold and full bodied. As the grapes have high sugar content, the wines will normally also have high alcohol content.

Zinfandel grapes are not considered to be exceptionally difficult to grow compared to other varieties. However, the thin-skinned grapes are prone to bunch rot and early ripening, both of which can present viticultural and winemaking challenges.

As for food pairing, big juicy jammy Zinfandel wines are perfect matches with barbeque and hearty meat meals. Barbeque ribs, beef, lamb, sausages...there's really nothing too bold to match with Zinfandel. Lighter style Zins can do well with poultry dishes, and both would pair well with pasta dishes. Zinfandel's wide pairing range also allows it to be paired with more difficult dishes to match with red wine such as chili, stews, or pizza.

Regardless of where the grape originated or the path it has taken to end up in our vineyards, on our shelves, and in our cellars...Zinfandel has proven itself to be a survivor and a varietal we are pleased to have planted in Monterey County.

***Bryce Ternet** - is a contributing editor and is the author of: "The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula."*

RECIPE

STEAK SANDWICHES

with Horseradish Mustard and Watercress

Ingredients:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) | unsalted butter, softened |
| 3 tablespoons | drained bottled horseradish |
| 3 tablespoons | Dijon mustard |
| 1 ½ tablespoons | minced shallot |
| 1 (1lb) piece | flank steak (¾ to 1 inch thick) |
| 1 (20 to 22 inch) | baguette |
| 1 large | bunch watercress, tough stems discarded |



Method:

Preheat broiler. Blend together butter, horseradish, mustard, shallot, salt and pepper to taste in a bowl with a fork until well combined. Pat steak dry, season both sides well with salt and pepper, and put on rack of broiler pan. Spread top of steak with 1 tablespoon mustard butter, then broil 2-3 inches from heat for 5 minutes. Turn over and spread other side with 1 tablespoon mustard butter, then broil 4-5 minutes more for medium-rare. Transfer meat to a cutting board and let stand 5 minutes. (Leave broiler on.) Cut baguette crosswise into 4 equal sections, then halve sections horizontally. Broil bread, cut sides up, about 3 inches from heat, rotating pan once, until golden, 30 seconds to one minute. Holding knife at a 45-degree angle, very thinly slice steak across the grain. Spread cut sides of bread with mustard butter and mound steak on half of bread. Top with watercress and remaining bread. Serve with a full-bodied red wine.

VISITING Varietals



PINOT BLANC

Pronunciation:
PEE-noh BLAHK

Pinot Blanc (or Pinot Bianco) is a semi-dry white wine that is often compared to Chardonnay. It is typically crisp and refreshing, and depending on where it's made, it can be sweet or have nutty flavors. It's very common for winemakers to use the Pinot Blanc grape when making sparkling and sweet dessert wines as well.

You will find that Pinot Blanc is a fascinating little wine that doesn't get a lot of attention but it is in more wines than you may think.

What is Pinot Blanc? - In France, it is known as Pinot Blanc (PEE-no blahnk) and in Italy it is Pinot Bianco. No matter which name you use, this varietal of white wine grape produces a medium-dry to dry white wine that is familiar throughout the world.

The Pinot Blanc grape originated from the Alsace region of France. It was modified from the Pinot Grigio grape, which is a variation of the Pinot Noir grape. This relationship between the two white wines and the famous red explains the shared name.

Compared to Pinot Grigio and Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc is rounder and is typically less acidic. The fruit flavors of Pinot Grigio also tend to be brighter.

Generally, oak is not used in the maturation process of Pinot Blanc. It is typically a still wine, though it is often a base for sparkling wines (particularly in Italy and California) or as a sweet dessert wine such as the ice wines.

This white wine's softer characteristics make it a good match for foods of a similar profile. The wine will be lost in a meal made of flavorful or spicy foods, so keep the food flavors light and airy.

Some good options for a Pinot Blanc pairing include seafood, light-flavored meats, light to medium sauces (particularly white and butter sauces), and mild-flavored cheese choices.

CHEESE

Varietals



CAMEMBERT

Camembert is undoubtedly the most famous of the French cheeses.

It is the king of cheeses, or at the very least the most popular one. It is a mainstay of every cheese plate and also lends itself to many surprising culinary configurations. Traditionally made from raw milk, today Camembert is for the most part made from pasteurized milk.

In 1791, at the Manoir de Beaumonde in the village of Camembert, Marie Harel met a defiant priest from Brie who was fleeing the Revolution. He taught her a new way of making Camembert, which at the time was a fresh cheese, that gave it a rind and allowed it to travel on every continent.

At that time, the round box made from poplar wood was a veritable revolution that allowed Camembert to brave even the longest journeys. The meeting of Mr. Leroy and Mr. Ridel at the end of the 19th century allowed for the box to be perfected: two very thin rounds of poplar wood joined by a long strip of the same wood and fastened with tiny nails.

The fresh Camembert cheese is bland, hard and crumbly in texture. Young Camembert has a milky and sweet taste. As the cheese matures it forms a smooth, runny interior and a white bloomy rind that is typical of Camembert cheese. It has a rich, buttery flavour. The rind is bloomy white caused by a white fungus, called penicillium candidum. The rind is meant to be eaten with the cheese.

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Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

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|  Mesa Del Sol 2013 Prima Rosso | | \$32.00 | \$24.00 | \$25.60 |
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