

BC GUILD OF WINE JUDGES

April 2008

CLASS E4 – DRY RED ZINFANDEL

Presented by Elaine Peligren (Nanaimo Chapter)

INTENDED OUTCOMES

After reading these notes you should know:

1. Different regions and countries have different names for Zinfandel style grapes.
2. Zinfandel grapes produce very ripe fruit, high sugar, potentially high alcohol and bold flavors in their wines.
3. Some California Zinfandel vineyards contain vines more than 100 years old.
4. In Old Vine Zinfandel wines, they often have blackberry and raspberry fruit flavors, spice and are complex with a rich texture.
5. In cooler areas, Zinfandel tends towards raspberry, cranberry and red cherry. In hotter climates it becomes much more blackberry, plum, jam and dried fruit driven.
6. Because of the U.S./Canada tariff war, British Columbia has a liquor ban on US Wines and Alcohol; the BC Liquor stores only carry four Zinfandel wines and none of them are from the U.S.

INTRODUCTION

Zinfandel is a black-skinned wine grape (*Vitis Vinifera*) used primarily to make red wine and despite its strong association with California, Zinfandel did not originate in California. DNA research established that it is genetically identical to the Croatia grape Crljenak Kastelanski, also known by the historic name Tribidrag and to Primitivo in southern Italy. The grape probably originated on the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia. It reached the United States in 1800s and eventually became one of California's important wine grapes.

BCAWA TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

Ingredients:	Must contain at least 85% Zinfandel Grapes
Alcohol:	11% - 16%
Colour:	Medium Red to Garnet Black
Sugar:	0% - 1.0%
Specific Gravity:	0.990 to 0.994
Acid:	5.0 g/L – 7.0 g/L
pH:	3.4 – 4.0
Tannin:	may be somewhat astringent
Body:	Full-bodied

TYPICAL FLAVOURS & AROMAS CHARACTERISTICS:

Aromas:

Red Fruits: Raspberry, Strawberry, Red Cherry, Red Plum

Black Fruits: Blackberry, Black Cherry, Black Plum, Blueberry

Spices: Black Pepper, Licorice, Cinnamon, Cloves, Nutmeg, Anise, Mint

Other Flavours: Eucalyptus, Chocolate, Vanilla, Toast, Coffee, Dried Fruit, Earth, Leather, Cedar, and Tar

Appearance:

Combination of ruby, garnet and mahogany wine colors depending on the age

Nose:

Medium-plus to pronounced intensity with ripe raspberry, blackberry, black cherry, plum and sometimes jammy or dried-fruit characteristics. Black pepper, licorice and sweet spice may be evident, with vanilla, toast or coconut where oak influence is significant.

Palate:

Dry, medium to medium-plus acidity, medium to medium-plus ripe tannin, high alcohol and medium-plus to full body. Fruit intensity is usually pronounced, dominated by ripe red and black fruits with pepper and spice.

Finish:

Medium-plus to very long in higher-quality examples, often carrying ripe berry fruit, spice and warming alcohol.

WHERE ZINFANDEL STYLE WINES ARE MADE

United States — California

California has significant plantings of Old-Vine Zinfandel sometimes 50 -100 years old. Regions that grow Zinfandel in California include Lodi, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma, and Russian River Valley.

United States — Napa Valley

Amador County / Sierra Foothills, and Paso Robles.

Italy

Particularly in Puglia (Known as Primitivo), including Primitivo di Manduria.

Croatia

Known as Crljenak Kaštelanski and Tribidrag.

Other Regions

Smaller quantities are produced in Australia, South Africa, Canada (Okanagan), Chili and elsewhere.

FOOD PAIRINGS:

- Barbecued beef or pork
- BBQ Ribs
- Pulled Pork
- Burgers
- Grilled Steak
- Sausages
- Smoked Meats
- Lamb
- Pizza
- Tomato Based Pasta
- Aged Cheddar
- Gouda and Other Flavorful Cheeses
- Spiced and Ethnic Dishes

ABOUT THIS FLIGHT:

Even though we cannot access wines from the USA in British Columbia, I was able to access them from Alberta, through family. We included a few Old Vine Zinfandel wines from California, Primitivo wines from Italy, a Zinfandel wine from the Okanagan Valley, one from Chile and one made by one of our Vancouver Island winemakers. We have personally tasted all the wines presented. We hope you enjoy tasting them as much as we had in putting this flight together for you.

Happy wine tasting! Great way to start off our new tasting year!