

THREE OLD VINE ZINS FOR THE 4TH OF JULY

IS THERE ANYTHING MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF AMERICAN VITICULTURE HISTORY THAN OUR OLD VINES?

The 4th of July brings back memories of parades, slip and slides, s'mores and late nights under the stars. It's also a celebratory Summer day when friends and good food take priority for many hours before the fireworks show.

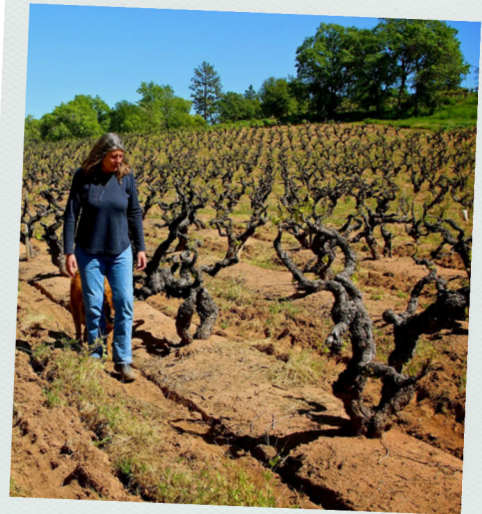
In the 'what's old is new again' world that we live in, extremely old grapevines allow us to look back to a bygone era through unique lenses buried deep in the ground. Many of these vineyards are celebrating 160 years and are finally getting the attention and protection from development they truly deserve.

LINCOLN WAS PRESIDENT

What makes old-vine interesting? It's not just for their rarity, there is a signature they offer to wine drinkers.

The vines are typically own rooted (not grafted) and dry famed (no irrigation), and sensitive a changing climate. In these conditions, their yields are very small (under 2 tons/acre). The results are concentrated flavors, density, and layers upon layers of character. It is an honor to share these bottles of vinous history, nearing 400 years worth, that have been aging gracefully in the barrel and bottle just waiting for you!

As much fun as I had sourcing them, the real treat is you sharing them with loved ones. I encourage you to open these bottles soon as they are fabulous wines for Summer.



Terri Harvey walking her Original GrandPere Vineyard in Amador County, CA



PETER FRANUS

BRANDLIN



Peter at Brandlin Vineyard, 1200ft above Napa Valley

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**IT’S A MAGNIFICENT
AND MAGICAL
SETTING THAT
ULTIMATELY FINDS
ITS WAY INTO THE
WINE.**
”

Quitting work to be your own boss is certainly a popular topic these days, but we can thank the merger and acquisition craze of the late 1980s as the reason adventurous winemakers ditched their new bosses to make the kind of wines they actually like.

Winery Such is the case with Peter Franus, the winemaker for Mount Veeder Winery until its purchase by Augustin Huneeus, then head of Franciscan Winery, in 1989. It wasn’t long before Peter wanted to maintain his favorite grape sources including Brandlin Vineyard to make real wines of place. This was not in the plans for Huneeus and investors, who preferred focusing on just a couple of wines including cabernet and a proprietary red. So Peter left to pursue his own winemaking path, which is now 32 vintages deep, all of which have included Brandlin Zinfandel!

Region Napa Valley is mostly thought of as a narrow strip of valley *floor*, dotted with fabled wineries and beautiful landscapes. But on either side are rugged mountains with remote ridge line vineyards atop dense forest. It is in here where the morning sunshine and late afternoon breezes breathe life on less fertile soils of granite, slate and schist creating wines of structure and distinction. One such vineyard is Brandlin, planted in 1926, that provides the raw materials to create wines from a place “that is as close to heaven as I am going to get” according to Peter’s mom.

Wine From old vines on this hillside, wines are bound to be layered and complex. The wine unfolds with aromas of red fruits and green matcha tea. Dig deep in the glass to find darker fruits of black cherry, white pepper and allspice. It’s common to bundle the many flavors together into the descriptor ‘zin spice’, which is both peppery, sweet, and savory. The palette is incredibly smooth, and finishes with a soft vanilla note mingling with other sweet spices, and a graceful finish like a Pinot Noir.

Pairing The complexity of this flavor profile means thinking outside the norms of our Western cooking. Peter recommended, especially for grilling season, baby back ribs seasoned with Chinese 5 spice. Tip: par cook the ribs in the oven before finishing on the grill, along with grilled portobello mushrooms. On the side or as a substitute: veggie paella using brown rice and adding chickpeas for heartiness.

Retail price \$43.00 | Member price: \$34.40



”
**THE DIRT,
THE MICRO-CLIMATE
AND
DON'T SCREW IT UP**”
”

It has been a pleasure getting to know Matt Cline recently. I first met him 10 years ago at a wine tasting, but I've learned he's an encyclopedia on old vines and fights to protect these historic vineyards and I (and our customers) just love his wines!

Winery Matt is a UC Berkeley and UC Davis graduate, who started in the industry by helping his brother build Cline Cellars into a major producer of excellent old vine wines before that phrase was mainstream. After nearly 20 years, Matt and his wife Erin created Three Wine Co in 2006 to focus on three things: “The Dirt, the Micro-Climature and Don't Screw it Up” resulting in wines of unique character and flavor across a dozen distinct old vine wines each vintage. Then they do it while staying committed and humble to making excellent, small production wine from classic sites.

Region From their winery and tasting room at the Old Sugar Mill in Clarksburg, they are positioned between the very old vines of Contra Costa County and Napa Valley, where Matt sources grapes for his Napa Cabernets. The Evangelho Vineyard has a fascinating story that goes back to the 1880s. Located 50 miles east of San Francisco, it is an alluvial sand bar on the southern end of the delta. Azorean farmers planted the Delhi Sandy Loam soils with grapes because little else would grow there. These 130 year old vines are dry-farmed with roots that extend down 40+ feet in loose soils. Combined with the delta's cool breezes, these ancient vines produce intense and dark wines, while still being sensible and elegant with a natural acidity.

Wine Three's Evangelho Zin is dark and concentrated, while also balanced with an integrated palette of flavors, smooth texture, and long finish. The color saturates your glass while aromas are vibrant and varied. Ripe maraschino cherries mix with earthy and savory notes of dried sage, pink peppercorn, black olive, charcoal and toasted mesquite. A field blend of Petite Sirah, Mourvedre and Alicante adds extra character!

Pairing Erin Cline recommends Ratatouille with Evangelho. Eggplant, zucchini, garden tomatoes- peeled, diced and cooked down before adding - thinly sliced onions and red pepper (no green) lot's of garlic, fresh thyme, dried oregano, and finished with slivers of basil. The sweetness from the tomatoes bring out the dark fruit of the wine.

Retail price \$39.00 | Member price: \$31.20

VINO NOCETO

ORIGINAL GRANDPERE



”
THIS VINEYARD HAS A MIND OF ITS OWN. AND THE SMALL CLUSTERS GIVES THE WINES THEIR DISTINCT CONSISTENCY OF FRUIT AND ACID BALANCE.
”

A family getaway in the Sierra foothills turned into an obsession for one variety, but it was a chance encounter years later that uncovered a one-of-a-kind, historical vineyard for this winery to carry on the tradition of Amador zinfandel.

Winery Bay Area couple Suzy and Jim and Gullett bought property in the foothills in the 1980’s without knowing just how much wine would impact their new life. With the help of local experts and trips to the old world, they decided to plant a small vineyard with Sangiovese. Since then, they’ve grown from hobbyists into ‘the best Sangiovese in California’. But how does this lead us to Zinfandel? Good question! After becoming head winemaker in 2002, Rusty Folena tapped his former boss to buy grapes from Original Grandpere Vineyard, which they have now done for the last 20 vintages!

Region In the western slopes of the Sierra Nevadas, gold mining families settled there in the 1850s and many Italian immigrants planted vineyards of mixed varieties, including zinfandel, on the granitic sand and clay loams soils. One such vineyard, dating back to the 1860s, is still producing grapes after 150 years. The Original Grandpere Vineyard has been in the careful hands of Terri Harvey since 1982, and provides fruit for a few lucky wineries, including Vino Noceto, in Amador County.

Wine OGP is a classic example letting the vineyard do the talking. How? By gently protecting the fruit. Grapes are destemmed, but not crushed, and fermentation happens in a submerged cap - no punchdowns or pumpovers. The wine is aged in 30% new French oak barrels the first year, then another year in neutral oak. Older vintages have been described as long, vivid, supple, even enlightened. The 2018 starts with aromas of sweet oak spice with wild berries, dried grass and white pepper. There’s something Brunello-like about it ... no surprise given their love of the Sangiovese!

Pairing This wine is meant for foods loaded with flavor, but not overpowering. Try veal chops seasoned with thyme and rosemary and sautéed mushroom and port wine sauce on top. Serve alongside brussels sprouts or french fries (freedom fries!) cooked with shallots. A fitting vegetarian pairing is walnut gnocchi in brown butter and sage sauce. Plus Noceto means walnut in Italian. Buon appetito!

Retail price \$45.00 | Member price: \$36.00