

9 Rock-Solid Zinfandels from Sonoma

New reviews from the surprisingly good 2011 vintage

Tim Fish

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

If this week's collection of new Zinfandel releases is any indication, the 2011 vintage in Sonoma is promising indeed. There are good choices in every style and at all price points.

The father-daughter team of Kent and Shauna Rosenblum produced a knockout Zin from Westphall Ridge Vineyard, situated high above Dry Creek in the Rockpile appellation. Zin veteran St. Francis also produced a winning version.

If you're a hedonist who loves big, jammy Zins, don't miss the wines listed here from Mazzocco and Wilson. Ken and Diane Wilson own both wineries; Diane makes the wine for Wilson while the French winemaker Antoine Favero handles Mazzocco.

Finally, these Zinfandels provide solid value. Bogle, as always, delivers bang for the buck, but also look for Kirkland Signature Sonoma County Old Vine 2011 at your local Costco.

ROCK WALL Zinfandel Rockpile Rockpile Road Westphall Ridge Vineyard 2011 Score: 91 | \$40

Vibrant and focused, with aromas of smoke and briary cherry followed by elegant and complex flavors of red plum, anise and cracked pepper. Drink now through 2020. 544 cases made. —T.F.

MAZZOCCO Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley Briar 2011 Score: 90 | \$29

Zesty and ripe, yet balanced by a core of tannins and crisp acidity, offering aromas of raspberry, spice and fresh hay, and lively flavors of cherry and anise. Drink now through 2018. 817 cases made. —T.F.

ST. FRANCIS Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley 2011 Score: 90 | \$45

Appealingly ripe and jammy, with floral raspberry and spice aromas leading to flavors of cherry pie, grilled anise and toasted cinnamon. Drink now through 2018. 500 cases made. —T.F.

ST. FRANCIS Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley Amann Vineyard Old Vines 2011 Score: 90 | \$45

Vibrant and zesty, with briary cherry aromas and layered flavors of jammy raspberry, spiced cinnamon and dried herb that linger toward bright tannins. Drink now through 2019. 760 cases made. —T.F.

BOGLE Zinfandel California Old Vine 2011 Score: 88 | \$11

Soft, juicy and altogether fun to drink. The aromas of sweet dried cherry and herb lead to zesty raspberry, underbrush and white pepper flavors. Drink now through 2017. 145,000 cases made. —T.F.

WILSON Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley Sydney 2011 Score: 88 | \$36

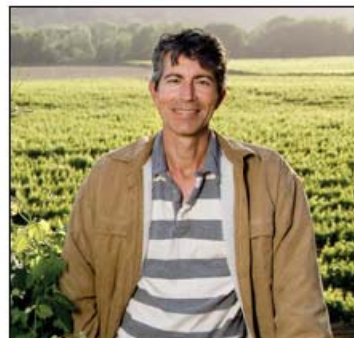
Ripe and zesty, with appealing baked raspberry and caramel aromas and jammy flavors of cherry, herb and tobacco. Drink now through 2018. 372 cases made. —T.F.

THE FEDERALIST Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley Visionary 2011 Score: 87 | \$29

A solid Zinfandel for the vintage, offering tart cherry and herb aromas, followed by balanced flavors of raspberry, charred tobacco and spice. Drink now through 2018. 8,000 cases made. —T.F.

KIRKLAND SIGNATURE Zinfandel Sonoma County Old Vine 2011 Score: 87 | \$10

Soft and quite ripe, this is a good quaff, with notes of dried plum, licorice and spicy cinnamon. Drink now through 2017. 23,800 cases made. —T.F.



Robert Scheid

Mazzocco winemaker Antoine Favero made two outstanding 2011s from the Dry Creek Valley appellation.

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