

Zin the light and grace of California

BY PEG MELNIK

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Tue, Jan 21, 2014

Zinfandel defines California.

That's how Morgan Twain Peterson of Sonoma's Bedrock Wine Co. sees it.

"Zinfandel, rendered well, is the vinous architecture of California -- filled with light and grace," he said.

Twain Peterson is behind our wine-of-the-week winner - the Bedrock, 2012 Old Vine Sonoma County Zinfandel, a knockout at \$25.

With an eye to the Zinfandel Advocates & Producers (ZAP) Tasting on Saturday in San Francisco's Presidio, we offer a line-up of zins that run the gamut from elegant to jammy.

The Bedrock is a rock-star zin that falls into the later category. It has depth and it's briary, with notes of blackberry, herbs and cracked black pepper. It's jammy and has good structure.

Other impressive zins in the flight include:

Seghesio, 2012 Sonoma County Zinfandel, \$24, an impressive, spicy zin with an elegant structure.

Rancho Zabaco, 2012 Sonoma County Sonoma Heritage Vines Zinfandel, \$15, a very tasty, approachable zin with a great concentration of ripe fruit.

Easton, 2012 Amador County Zinfandel, \$18, a juicy zinfandel with notes of black cherry, blackberry, herbs and spice.

Here's the back story on Bedrock: Twain Peterson is the son of Joel Peterson, the founder of Sonoma's Ravenswood Winery. Peterson is called the "Godfather of Zinfandel" by many in Wine Country and is credited for helping put gutsy zin in the spotlight.

What happens behind the scenes to make the gutsy Bedrock a standout?

Twain Peterson said, "We work with some of the best vineyards in the world. We prune and get to know vineyards because the only way to know when to pick is by fundamentally understanding the dirt and the vineyards planted on it. The more I am humbled as a farmer, the less arrogant I become as a winemaker."

Wine writer Peg Melnik can be reached at 707-521-5310 or peg.melnik@pressdemocrat.com.

Wine of the Week

With an eye to ZAP, scouting for the tastiest zinfandels

Wine writer Peg Melnik had a blind tasting this week of zinfandels in celebration of the ZAP (Zinfandel Advocates & Producers) Grand Tasting in San Francisco this Saturday at the Presidio.

(www.zinfandel.org/) The zinfandels in this flight ran the gamut from elegant to jammy and everything in-between. Our wine-of-the-week winner is the Bedrock, 2012 Old Vine Sonoma County Zinfandel, a knockout at \$25.

TOP PICK

Bedrock Wine Co.

Bedrock, 2012 Old Vine Sonoma County Zinfandel, 14.6 percent alcohol, \$25.

Four stars.

A rock star zin with depth. Briary and layered with notes of blackberry, herbs and cracked black pepper. It has good structure, but also manages to be a jammy knockout.

Other impressive wines:

Easton, 2012 Amador County Zinfandel, 14.5 percent, \$18. Four stars.

A juicy zInfandel with notes of black cherry, blackberry, herbs and spice. Has a creamy texture and a lingering finish.

Rancho Zabaco, 2012 Sonoma County Sonoma Heritage Vines Zinfandel, 15.3 percent, \$15. Four stars.

A zin with a great concentration of ripe fruit. Aromas and flavors of blackberry, raspberry and caramel. Nice length. Approachable.

Seghesio, 2012 Sonoma County Zinfandel, 14.8 percent, \$24. Four stars.

A spicy zin with an elegant structure. Briary, with notes of blackberry, raspberry and cracked black pepper. Zesty finish. Striking.

Cline, 2012 Contra Costa County Ancient Vines Zinfandel, 14.5 percent, \$14. Three and 1/2 stars.

A tasty zin with aromas and flavors of blackberry, toast and caramel. Hint of chocolate and coffee. Soft tannins. Long finish.