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5 Fascinating Facts About Zinfandel

Posted on [February 27, 2015](#) by [Robert Johnson](#) — [Leave a comment](#)



grape variety of them all.

Everything from peperoni pizza to barbecued meats, and from thick, juicy steaks to dark chocolate goes with **Zinfandel** — depending on the style in which it's made.

Here are five fascinating facts about this expressive, personality-packed variety...

1. Zinfandel may be the most versatile

It can be used to make sweet blush wines (known as White Zinfandel), dry red wines, dry rosé-style wines, sweet dessert wines and even Port-style wines. That diversity also makes it extremely versatile with food.

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2. The term “Old Vine” has no legal meaning.

Just like “Reserve” or “Vintner’s Choice,” it’s simply a designation the wineries may choose to include on a wine bottle. “Old Vine” is particularly common on Zinfandel bottles, simply because most of the oldest grapevines in California — some dating back to pre-Prohibition years — grow Zinfandel grapes. (The Grandpere Vineyard, located near Plymouth, Calif., was planted in 1869 and is still producing wine-worthy grapes.)

3. Zinfandel is genetically connected to Primitivo.

Both have been shown to be the genetic equivalent of Crljenak Kastelanski, a Croatian grape variety.

4. White Zin probably saved Zinfandel.

It was the 1970s. America’s love affair with wine was kicking into high gear, with a strong focus on Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. Up and down the state, Zinfandel vineyards were being eyed for either uprooting or grafting over to Cabernet — a variety that performs best in warmer climates, just like Zin.

But when the sweet blush wine known as White Zinfandel was accidentally created by Bob Trinchero of Sutter Home Winery (the result of a stuck fermentation), a new product category was created, White Zin became uproariously popular, and countless Zinfandel vineyards were spared — some of which are being used for making red Zinfandel today.

5. As of 2013, there were 48,638 acres in California devoted to Zinfandel, led by San Joaquin County’s 19,098.

San Joaquin was followed, in order, by these counties: Sonoma, Fresno, Madera, San Luis Obispo, Mendocino, Amador, Sacramento, Napa and Merced.

And if you check out [Vinesse’s latest Zinfandel Sampler](#), you’ll find three different American Viticultural Areas represented — a sign of Zin’s adaptability and versatility not only when it comes to food, but also in where it’s grown.

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