



Advancing a Legacy

The Zinfandel Chronicles

Vineyards
with
Heritage

Pioneering Vineyards

Pioneering Vineyards



The story of Zinfandel is a mystery that continues to unfold. A varietal with a past that has only recently been uncovered, Zinfandel clones available to growers have been limited. Winegrapes from iconic “old vine” vineyards are admired for their high-quality reputations, and winegrape growers and researchers have longed to preserve the special qualities of these old vines for future generations. This was the inspiration for the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard Project.

The Heritage Vineyard Project has been implemented in stages. Phase I and Phase II, conducted at the University of California at Davis (UC Davis) Oakville Research Station in Napa Valley by UC Davis researchers, developed growing conditions and established a benchmark for further study of the vines in additional growing areas throughout California.

During Phase III outreach began to take the science to the fields. ZAP members in other regions throughout California were identified to develop replicated plantings of Phase II Heritage Vineyard Project selections using the originally established protocols. Cultivating these selections in more traditional Zinfandel growing areas while reducing variability in cultivation practices would provide information about their similarities and differences, and determine the impact of climate, geography and other factors unique to individual vineyards and regions.

The initial satellite trials are being conducted in Sonoma and Dry Creek Valleys, Sonoma County; and Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County, at vineyards selected by a joint UC Davis-ZAP committee. Selections were based on growers’ previous experiences with vineyard experiments and small lot fermentations, vineyard space and equipment availability, analytical and experimental capabilities, and available personnel.

FEATURED HERE ARE FOUR VINEYARDS THAT ARE SIGNIFICANT TO THE FUTURE OF ZINFANDEL WORLDWIDE. BESIDES PHYSICAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND RESEARCH CAPABILITIES, THE VINEYARDS SELECTED EACH POSSESS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THEIR REGION AND AMONG ZINFANDEL GROWERS THAT WILL HELP TO ADVANCE THE EXPANSION, CREDIBILITY AND QUALITY OF THE ZINFANDEL VARIETAL. THE VINEYARDS SELECTED WERE CHOSEN FOR THEIR ROLES IN BUILDING ZINFANDEL'S HERITAGE, AS WELL AS THEIR DIVERSITY, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR HISTORIES.



Dusi Ranch, Dante Dusi Vineyard and Caterina's Hill

Perseverance Reaps Rewards

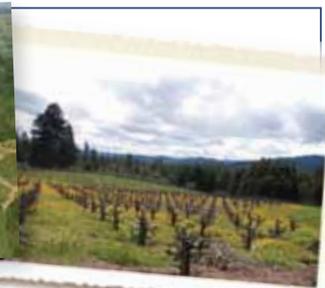
In 1925, Italian immigrants Caterina and Sylvester Dusi purchased what would become their first vineyard on 80 acres of land adjacent to Highway 101, just north of Paso Robles. Here they built what came to be known as Dusi Ranch, planting Zinfandel vines purchased from a nursery in the Central Valley. As the Dusi family grew, Sylvester and his three boys worked together, adapting the business to the times. In 1944 the couple purchased 22 acres directly across the highway from their ranch, which would come to be known as Caterina's Hill. In 1945 vineyard operations grew with the purchase of an additional 100 acres that would become Dante Dusi Vineyard. While the Dusis have focused on winegrape growing throughout the years, they also have produced premium Zinfandel wines. Dusi Ranch, Dante Dusi Vineyard and Caterina's Hill are still owned and operated by Dusi family members who grow, process, transport and market grapes from their vineyards. The vineyards are all in close proximity, and while each is owned, operated and managed separately, they are all part of a proud Dusi family legacy. After seven decades, Benito and Dante continue to work their properties alongside Sylvester and Caterina's grandchildren and great grandchildren. The Dusi family winemaking tradition lives on with Sylvester's and Caterina's great granddaughter, Janell Dusi, producing the first wines to carry the Dusi name in more than 50 years – J Dusi wines.



DuPratt Vineyard

Family Ties Bind

Like many from the "old country," Louis Cuneo traveled from Italy to pursue the American Dream. When he loaned money to John Pardini to buy what is now known as DuPratt Vineyard, he unwittingly started the family business. Pardini planted a small block of Zinfandel grapes in 1920, cultivating the 1,400-foot mountain vineyard and additionally producing several varieties of red and white wine. Cuneo's niece, Theresa, inherited his mortgage note, later gained full interest in the land, and went on to produce fruit for such notable wineries in the area as Edmeades, Kendall Jackson and Steele Winery. Although Theresa sold the vineyard to the DuPratt family in the 1970s, her entrepreneurial spirit lives on through her descendents, who reclaimed the property in 2007, and continue to grow grapes from the original old vines planted by Pardini.





Lytton Springs

From Afterthought to Exceptional

Beginning with a colorful 19th century captain and evolving into a model sustainable enterprise and historic vineyard, Lytton Springs tells a story of land development, boom and bust, chance encounters, and the rebirth of the wine industry, all reflected in the old vines still standing today. The Sonoma County property originally developed as a resort by Captain W.H. Litton didn't take advantage of existing vineyards. It wasn't until the land had passed through a number of owners over nearly a century that the value of the vineyard was truly recognized and its vines produced fruit coveted by some of the most enviable wineries in the region. Over time, the property has been parceled out, re-named and ultimately re-unified; and it continues to produce Zinfandel grapes that provide the backbone and character for Lytton Springs wine.



Old Hill Ranch Vineyard

Vision Leads Transformation

When William McPherson Hill planted the first non-mission grape varieties in Sonoma in the mid-1850s, his vision launched a movement toward experimentation and innovation that would chart a course for Zinfandel wine. He planted the earliest known Zinfandel grapes in California in 1856, and when his 1866 vintage gained national recognition, it sparked a planting craze for the previously unknown Zinfandel grape. Otto and Ann Teller later revitalized Old Hill Ranch when the overgrown vineyard was barely visible among a crop of blackberries, abandoned cars and various bathroom fixtures. Recognizing the immense value of the Zinfandel old vines the Tellers continued to cultivate the grapes, and nearly a century after its creation, Zinfandel wine was again being produced from fruit grown at Old Hill Ranch. Today, the vision for Old Hill Ranch continues with a commitment to science, tradition and innovation. Ann Teller's son Will Bucklin now manages the vineyard, and with his three siblings founded Bucklin Winery in 2000. Together they have documented Old Hill's history and mapped its vast field blend while taking steps to preserve the land from future development.



Share your love of Zinfandel! Connect with the World of Zin.

ZAP acts as a resource, connecting the Zinfandel community around the world. ZinWorld, found at the website: zinfandel.org, serves as ZAP's comprehensive resource center and online social networking site for wineries, growers, and advocates.

Visit zinfandel.org to learn more about ZAP, read updates on the latest research, find upcoming events in your area, and connect with Zinfandel enthusiasts.



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