



## Harvey, Anderson pick ZAP zinfandel grapes ahead of the rain

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Ahead of the rain, 1.73 tons of zinfandel grapes from The Heritage Vineyard within UC Davis' Experimental Station in Oakville were harvested on Wednesday, Sept. 28 under the direction of research associate Mike Anderson and winemaker Scott Harvey.

"After a cold spring and a normal summer the fruit was healthy and good looking," Harvey said. "With the typical uneven ripening we expect from zinfandel, the grapes were well-grown and the crop yield was average or slightly below average. There were lots of flavors, which predict a terrific wine. I like to pick at lower sugar, to make a more European-style wine," Harvey adds. "It appears that the wine will have a 13.8 to 14.4 percent alcohol, with good acidity. This will definitely produce the type of zinfandel which used to be made in Napa Valley 20 years ago."

The 1.73 tons of grapes were harvested at 26 degrees Brix, 3.3 pH and TA of .57 g/L. The grapes were brought to The Ranch in St. Helena, where they were de-stemmed and lightly crushed. The juice was immediately inoculated with D254 Lavin (yeast) and is being punched down three times a day. Harvey said he is planning for the wine to go into French oak; the wine will barrel age for approximately 18 months until it is bottled in June 2013.

Each year a different ZAP winemaker member makes the wine: 1997 was made by Nils Venge (Saddleback Cellars); 1998 by Robert Biale (Robert Biale Vineyards); 1999 by Matt Cline (Trinitas Cellars); 2000 by Rod Berglund (Joseph Swan Vineyards); 2001 by Joel Peterson (Ravenswood); 2002 by Ehren Jordan (Turley Wine Cellars), 2003 by Paul Draper (Ridge Vineyards), 2004 by Kent Rosenblum (Rosenblum Wine Cellars), 2005 by William Knuttel (Dry Creek Vineyard & Ottimino), 2006 by Jerry Seps (Storybook Mountain Vineyard), 2007 by Joel Peterson (Ravenswood), 2008 by Tom Mackey (St. Francis Winery), 2009 by Pete Seghesio (Seghesio Family Vineyards) and 2010 by Diane Wilson (Wilson Family Winery).

The Heritage Vineyard wines are only available for tasting and purchase at ZAP's Annual Festival; the next opportunity will be on Thursday, Jan. 26 at Epicuria: Food & Zinfandel Pairings and Saturday, Jan. 28 at The Grand Tasting: From A To Zinfandel, both at The Concourse in San Francisco.

**About the Heritage Vineyard Project** The Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard Project is an unprecedented collection of rare and famous zinfandel vine cuttings grown throughout California. It was originally established at the UC Davis Oakville Research Station in Napa Valley beginning in 1995. Zinfandel is now renowned as America's Heritage wine, but it first developed a reputation for fine wine as early as 1860 in California's North Coast region. Vintners had planted more than 34,000 acres of zinfandel by 1990; that number swelled to 50,000 acres by 1998. The varietal was poised, but not prepared, to begin a renaissance.

While zinfandel wines had achieved a place among the world's finest varietals, growers and vintners were unhappy with the selections of vines available commercially. The UC Davis Foundation Plant Services (FPS), which evaluates and virus-tests rootstock for commercial distribution, had only certified four selections of zinfandel in 1990. While these had successfully produced popular White Zinfandel wines, many thought they were not as well-suited to making a fine red wine. Red zinfandel wines had grown in popularity, but without additional rootstock to infuse some diversity, expansion of the varietal would be stalled.

Zinfandel Advocates & Producers recognized the importance of the ongoing research at UC Davis in creating greater diversity for growers, and partnered with the University to support the Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard Project.

The Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard Project has been a fruitful collaboration with a primary goal of providing superior zinfandel selections to growers as the basis for future plantings; in 2009 UC Davis FPS released 19 zinfandel selections to nurseries. While these selections require more evaluation in traditional zinfandel growing regions, they hold the promise of strengthening the reputation of zinfandel as the premier historic wine grape of California. Together UC Davis and ZAP continue to work toward preserving zinfandel's heritage while expanding the range of rootstock available to growers.

At the outset of the project it was clear that there were very significant differences in the quality of the wines currently being produced and available to the consumer, despite the lack of variety among zinfandel selections available to growers. This could be attributed to three things:

- 1) Genetic material — Clones that originated through natural mutations which occurred in buds and expressed themselves in different shoots on a vine or different vines within a vineyard. These could be maintained as new selections if they were identified and vegetatively propagated or
- 2) The growing environment — Terroir or soil type, slope and aspect, climate, sunlight, and other site factors could influence growth, ripening and final wine composition or
- 3) Vine and wine management — Training and cropping levels, fermentation temperature, yeast and barrel aging, winemaking skill and experience, and equipment all could affect perceived quality.