

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Ethics & Disclosure](#)
- [Recommendations](#)
- [Podcasts](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Contact](#)

[Winecast](#)

How To Survive ZAP

by Tim Elliott on 1/28/2011



Today starts the annual [Zinfandel Advocates & Producers](#) Festival for me in San Francisco. It's been a few years since I've attended so I have been thinking about the best strategy to cover the grand tasting tomorrow.

Back before my first ZAP, I asked pioneer wine blogger and ZAP veteran Alder Yarrow of [Vinography](#) for advice. He passed along wisdom that helped me to maximize my time on the floor tasting but still preserved my palate enough to delineate brambles from black raspberry by the end.

So here are his tips with a few others from my experiences with some color commentary for any readers attending ZAP tomorrow:

- **Have a plan** – I'm looking over the list of producers on the [ZAP website](#) to target producers I've not yet tasted or from regions I'm not familiar with.
- **Don't taste from producers you are already familiar with** - As cool as tasting the entire range of Zin from Ridge or Ravenswood in one go is, I will refrain from going to their tables until I have at least 60 or 70 new wines already tasted.
- **Spit the entire tasting** – The ZAP folks give you a large red plastic cup for this purpose. Use it or you will lose you objectivity very quickly (remember most of these wines are between 15 and 16% ABV). Don't know how? Check out [this article](#).

- **Take frequent breaks** – I break after 25 or 30 wines tasted, roughly every 45 minutes or so. This will help minimize the effects of the alcohol that is absorbed in your mouth. Even if you spit the whole time, you will feel the effects of tasting if you don't break.
- **Eat and drink plenty of water** – Bottled spring water, bread and plenty of cheese are strategically placed around the floor. When you break, eat and drink a bottle or two of water.
- **Wear dark clothes you won't mind donating after the tasting** – I'll be wearing a black mock turtleneck and blue jeans appearing as a wine tasting Steve Jobs. These dark colors will hide the inevitable spills you or someone else around you will splash your way. Don't wear white or something new.
- **Don't wear cologne, perfume or any other product with strong aromas** – Classic wine tasting etiquette. You'd be surprised how many people don't comply with this one.
- **Don't brush your teeth in the morning or gargle mouthwash** – Yes, hardcore wine tasting tactics but these strong flavors will effect your abilities to pick up nuances in the wines tasted. At least the first 10 or 20.
- **Eat a hearty breakfast or lunch but nothing spicy** – Before tasting so many wines it's important to have a full stomach. Like the strong flavors of toothpaste or mouthwash, hot sauce or spicy peppers will do the same thing. So no Denver omelette with Tabasco for me before the tasting tomorrow.
- **Take notes of only the wines that stand out** – You need to work quickly and as entertaining or educational notes from flawed wines are, they will take too much time to record and probably not be worth it. I will mark such wines in my log with the OMG shorthand and move on.
- **Print out Alder's Aroma Card** – It's a great resource and it's free. Get it [here](#) and have it handy in your pocket.
- **Have fun!** - Most of the people who are not wine geeks tasting tomorrow will come and have a blast. Some, too much of a blast. I have to remind myself tasting so many Zinfandels is a rare privilege that needs to be savored and enjoyed.

If you are there tomorrow say hi. I'll be the guy who looks like Steve Jobs scribbling notes and tweeting from my mobile phone. I'll be at the Mixed Blacks section fairly early in the tasting after a tip from Joel Peterson from Ravenswood this morning. Watch [my tweets](#) for any live coverage tomorrow which I will aggregate there. At least two podcasts are coming shortly so stay tuned.



Like

Sign Up to see what your friends like.

Tagged as: [ZAP](#), [Zinfandel Advocates & Producers](#)

[blog comments powered by Disqus](#)

Previous post: [Why Is California Syrah So Hard To Sell?](#)

Next post: [Occam's Razor & Wine Preservation](#)

- **Subscribe**



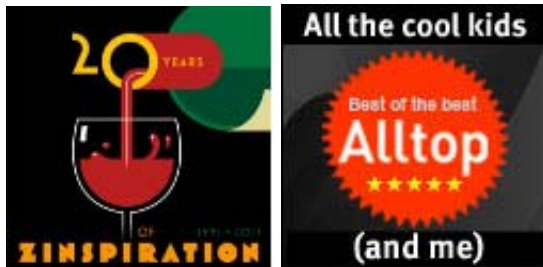
- **Newsletter**

Enter your email address:

Delivered by [TinyLetter](#)

- **Blog Search**

To search, type and hit en



- **Recent Comments**

- [Tim Elliott](#) on [Occam's Razor & Wine Preservation](#)
- Guest on [Occam's Razor & Wine Preservation](#)
- [Tweets that mention Introducing Winecast Insider | Winecast -- Topsy.com](#) on [Introducing Winecast Insider](#)
- [Tweets that mention Occam's Razor & Wine Preservation | Winecast -- Topsy.com](#) on [Occam's Razor & Wine Preservation](#)
- [Tim Elliott](#) on [How To Survive ZAP](#)

- **My Most Recent Wine Picks**

- [Quivira Vineyards and Winery, Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley 2008](#)
- [Inman Family, Pinot Noir, Thorn Ridge Ranch 2007](#)
- [Jean Farris Winery "Tempest" 2007](#)

- [Rodney Strong, “Symmetry”, Meritage Red Wine, Alexander Valley 2007](#)
- [Louis Jadot, Beaujolais-Villages 2009](#)

• WineZap Search

•

• Tags

[Alsace](#) [Beaujolais](#) [Blogging](#) [Blogroll](#) [Cabernet Franc](#) [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) [Carignan](#) [Carmenere](#)
[Chardonnay](#) [Composition](#) [Crushpad](#) [Films](#) [Grenache](#) [Malbec](#) [Menu for Hope](#) [Meritage](#) [Merlot](#) [Mourvedre](#)
[Opinion](#) [Petite Sirah](#) [Petit Verdot](#) [Pinot Noir](#) [Predictions](#) [Primitivo](#) [Red Blends](#) [Riesling](#) [Rose](#)
[Roussanne](#) [Sangiovese](#) [Sauvignon Blanc](#) [Semillon](#) [Shiraz](#) [Site News](#) [Sparkling Wine](#) [Syrah](#)
[Tempranillo](#) [Twitter Taste Live](#) [Weblogs](#) [White Blends](#) [Wine Blogging Wednesday](#)
[Wine Hacks](#) [Wine Marketing](#) [Wordpress](#) [ZAP](#) [Zinfandel](#)

• Categories

- [Announcements](#)
- [Articles](#)
- [Blog Links](#)
- [Editorial](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Podcast](#)
- [Posterous](#)
- [Quick Picks](#)
- [Recommendations](#)
- [Tasting Notes](#)
- [Unfiltered](#)
- [Vino Tech](#)
- [Wine 2.0](#)
- [Wine Blogging Wednesday](#)
- [Wine News](#)

• Archives



GREAT WINES

AFFORDABLE PRICES!

SHOP NOW >>

\$0 Shipping >
ON ALL ORDERS

mywinesdirect.com

The advertisement features three wine bottles: a dark green bottle on the left, a dark red bottle in the center, and a light green bottle on the right. The central bottle has a white label with the name 'Cordillera' and a small illustration of a landscape. The right bottle has a label with the name 'Baco' and a small illustration of a fish. The background is a light beige color.

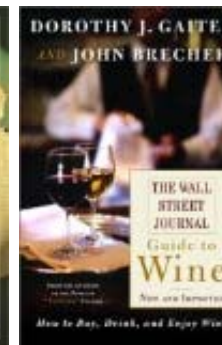
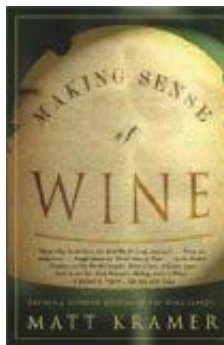
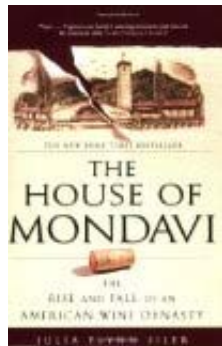
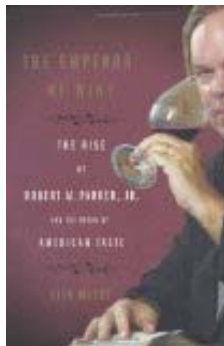
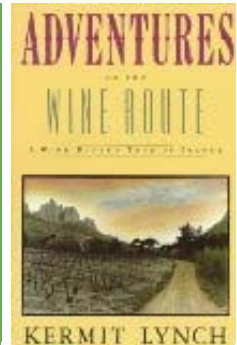
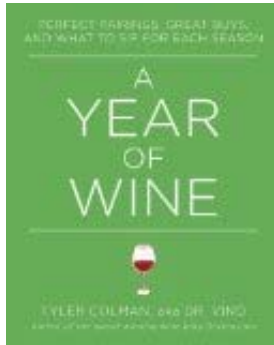
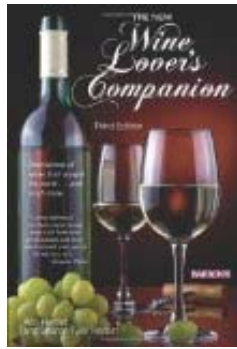
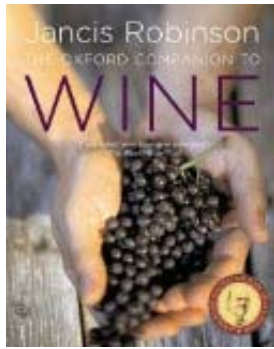
-

- **Blogroll**

- [1WineDude](#)
- [2 Days per Bottle](#)
- [750ml](#)
- [An Obsession with Food](#)
- [Appellation Australia](#)
- [Aristide](#)
- [Benito's Wine Reviews](#)
- [Bigger Than Your Head](#)
- [Biodynamics Blog](#)
- [Biodynamics is a Hoax](#)
- [Box Wines](#)

- [BrooklynGuy's Wine and Food Blog](#)
- [Budget Vino](#)
- [Catavino](#)
- [Dr. Vino](#)
- [Drinks Are On Me](#)
- [Enobytes](#)
- [FERMENTATION](#)
- [Good Grape Wine Co.](#)
- [Good Wine Under \\$20](#)
- [James Suckling](#)
- [Jamie Goode](#)
- [Juicy Tales](#)
- [McDuff's Food & Wine Trail](#)
- [Mutineer Magazine](#)
- [My Wine Education](#)
- [New York Cork Report](#)
- [On the Wine Trail in Italy](#)
- [Palate Press](#)
- [Rex Pickett](#)
- [Spittoon](#)
- [Steve Heimoff](#)
- [The Corkdork](#)
- [The Feiring Line](#)
- [The Gray Market Report](#)
- [The Pour](#)
- [The Zinquisition](#)
- [Vinography](#)
- [Wannabe Wino](#)
- [Wine Business Insider](#)
- [Wine Enthusiast](#)
- [Wine Peeps](#)
- [Wine Terroirs](#)
- [Winery Website Report](#)
- [winewaves](#)
- [Winexpression](#)

• Recommended Reading



Copyright © 2004-2011 [Acan Media, Inc.](#) and licensed to the public under [Creative Commons](#). — Powered by [WordPress](#) and [Thesis Theme](#).

