

Advertisement

Instantly watch TV shows  
FREE TRIAL!  
Click here

washingtonpost.com > Arts & Living > Food

FOLLOW FOOD AND DINING ON: [Social Media Icons]

THIS STORY: READ + | Comments

### The state of American zinfandel today

By Dave McIntyre  
Special to The Washington Post  
Tuesday, February 15, 2011; 1:11 PM

When I fell in love with wine, I fell in love with zinfandel. My wife and I developed our palates during vacations in California, with each successive visit devoted less to national parks or city landmarks and more to wine country. We'd try anything, but when we came back home it was zinfandel that captivated us with its wild, swashbuckling flavors and its devil-may-care sense of adventure. It transported us back to the West, a faraway land where we'd say we were from Washington and it would take a few minutes before someone would ask, "Oh, you mean D.C.?"



Recommended zins (Deb Lindsey/for The Washington Post)

Network News PROFILE X

Recommend 106

29

View More Activity

YOUR FEEDBACK

Corrections, suggestions?

TOOLBOX

Resize Print E-mail  
Yahoo! Buzz Reprints

COMMENT

3 Comments | View All >

COMMENTS ARE CLOSED

THIS STORY  
The state of American zinfandel today  
Recommended zinfandels

Over the years, we grew away from zinfandel. Our palates favored the more subtle, elegant and earthier wines of the Old World over the overtly fruity New World style. As we aged, restraint became a virtue: Less oak and less alcohol, please; a wine to dance with our meal rather than overpower it.

Zinfandel, meanwhile, moved in the opposite direction. In the late 1980s and early '90s, it was an endangered species, known primarily in its incarnation as white zinfandel, the slightly sweet pink wine that saved the grape from obscurity and helped turn many soda swillers into wine drinkers. At that time, winemakers, retailers and sommeliers commonly told of customers who insisted, "Zinfandel is not a red wine!"

Then something happened. "No wimpy wines!" became the battle cry of zin lovers. Production of zinfandel more than doubled between 1985 and 1995. (Tonnage has fluctuated but remained fairly consistent since, although white zinfandel still accounts for about 80 percent of the grape's production, according to the Wine Institute.) A fan club formed; Zinfandel Advocates and Producers celebrated its 20th anniversary last month in San Francisco. Zin became huge, a steroidal caricature of itself, a victim of excessive extraction and monstrously high alcohol.

Or did it? It's easy to make such generalizations, so I decided to test my modern anti-zin bias. Most California wines are higher in alcohol than they were two decades ago, after all,

Advertisement

Advertorials By SmarterLifestyles™



**TODAY: iPads for \$123.74?**  
Eye opening truth: Discover how iPads are being sold for an amazing 80% off retail. [Learn more](#)



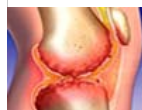
**SHOCKING Muscle Photos**  
Muscle building miracle discovered by scientists is a catalyst for huge muscle gains... [Learn more](#)



**How To Stay Asleep**  
Scientists finally discover a true all-natural sleep aid. Sleep better tonight... [Learn more](#)



**The Secret To Living Well**  
Get the car of your dreams with help from high potential penny stocks... [Learn more](#)



**Joint discomfort Warning**  
Shocking discovery by Cambridge Researcher's for amazing joint relief. [Learn more](#)

Advertisement

### TOP JOBS The Washington Post

- Business Jobs
- Computer Jobs
- Construction Jobs
- Education Jobs
- Engineering Jobs
- Healthcare Jobs

- Legal Jobs
- Management Jobs
- Media Jobs
- Non-Profit Jobs
- Sales Jobs
- Science Jobs

Find Your Dream Job Now!

keywords location

FIND JOBS

Jobs by SimplyHired

FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

Mesothelioma, Defective Drugs/Medical Devices, Environmental

Pollution, Accidents, Asbestos Cancer, BP Oil Spill

Zimmer High Flex, Malpractice, Personal Injury, Fosamax Femur Fracture, DePuy Hip, Gas Drilling

Looking to buy a home? Visit TWP Real Estate section for the latest open houses.

Enjoy a Taste of Ireland Tour, one week all inclusive from \$658

Make Your Vanguard Investing More Profitable - Free Research Report Reveals Best & Worst Funds

Network News

MY PROFILE X

Friends' Activity Most Popular Twitter Activity

Your Friends' Most Recent Activity

Login

You need to be logged into Facebook to see your friends' activity



Unemployment dips to 8.9 pct., 192K jobs added

2,014 people shared this.



Charles Krauthammer - From Baghdad to Benghazi

1,506 people shared this.



Let Westboro Baptist have their hate speech. We'll smother it with peace.

328 people shared this.



Brandon Davies suspended from BYU basketball team for honor code violation

473 people shared this.



Frederick official's comment that a woman's place is in the home creates uproar

1,899 people shared this.



No landfill search for body of slain teen, D.C. police say

353 people shared this.

Facebook social plugin

Follow The Post:

View More Activity

Featured Stories



U.S. prepares for more Islamist governments in Mideast



Sexual abstinence on the rise among young



China's plan to track cell phone use



Vulture: Media bets on Charlie Sheen dying soon

VULTURE

Meet the Oldest Member of the P.S. 22 Chorus

Hear Susan Boyle Sing the Theme for Trippy Ani...

Consider the Striking Similarities Between the...

The Six Kinds of Characters Who Wear Hawaiian ...

See all of Vulture »

---

**Ways you can get us**

[Mobile](#)  
[Apps](#)  
[Newsletters & alerts](#)  
[RSS](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Twitter](#)

[Podcasts](#)  
[Widgets](#)  
[Post Store](#)  
[Photo Store](#)  
[Washington Post Live](#)

**The Washington Post**

[About us](#)  
[Work for us](#)  
[Community Relations](#)  
[PostPoints](#)  
[Corrections](#)  
[Archive](#)  
[Contact the Ombudsman](#)

**Web site**

[Make us your homepage](#)  
[Newspaper](#)  
[Subscribe to the newspaper](#)  
[Home delivery service](#)  
[e-Replica](#)

**Advertise**

[In the newspaper](#)  
[On the Web site](#)  
[Mobile](#)  
[Events](#)  
[The Washington Post Company](#)  
[Corporate Web site](#)

---

**Partners**