

# ZINFOMANIA

May 2013

## JOEL'S DIARY:

### California resolves to revere its treasured elders

*California State Assemblyman Tom Daly is a friend of old vineyards, and hence a friend of Zinfandel.\**

In February, the Assembly representative from District 69 in Anaheim introduced what we view as a very important resolution. With backing from the Historic Vineyard Society and organizations like ZAP and California Grape Growers at the ready to rally support as needed, Mr. Daly's House Resolution 9 "Relative to historic vineyards" includes many WHEREASes. Among which, HR9 recognizes:

- That our oldest vineyards are an invaluable window into the history of California from both a social and agricultural perspective;
- The tenacity these extraordinary vines have exhibited over the years to withstand phylloxera and economic downturns – not to mention the popularity of mediocre Merlot;
- Their ongoing value as living repositories of budwood and genetic material that can ensure future generations get to taste the wines these hardy veterans produce;
- The prestige these old vines, which have reached and surpassed an age few if any humans will achieve in our lifetime, contribute to the international reputation of California wine,
- And finally, that these fragile centarians, which exist thanks to the passion of the vintners who tend them, are worthy of the respect and extra care they require to survive and sire future plantings.

As anybody who pays any attention to my ramblings in this newsletter knows, this is a subject (one of several) that I've been accused of going on (and on) about. Old vineyards have always made up the very core of Ravenswood's being, and many of our single-vineyard designated wines come from ranches that date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Having spent so many years with these ancient vines, I tend to view them as old friends. So I was eager to see this resolution passed.

In March, I was all set to make my case in Sacramento. I had an old vine photo album with pictures of wizened 100+ oldsters in Bedrock and other vineyards. I was going to talk about Louis Vigne – yes, that really was his name – who planted the first foreign-



imported vines vinifera in the Los Angeles area in 1831. My presentation included references to colorful characters like George Yount, Agoston Haraszthy, Joseph Osborn, William McPherson Hill and Jacob Bundschu.

Turns out I never had to leave Sonoma. The day before I was scheduled to address the Agriculture Committee, all seven members unanimously agreed to adopt HR9 and move it out of committee. The noted orator was silenced, but I'm not complaining.

Hopefully by the time you read this, the full California State Assembly will have voted to adopt HR9 and sign it into law.\*\*

**Resolved:** That the Assembly of the State of California recognizes the contribution of California's living historic vineyards to the agricultural and social heritage of the state as well as to the enjoyment

Cheers,

Joel

\* and Carignane and Mourvedre and Petite Sirah and ...

\*\*\* Just as we were about to hit print, we got this news: All ayes! HR9 passed!! Check our NoWimpyWines Facebook page to read more.

## 2011 Moscato

The Ravenswood Moscato has always been a fan favorite, especially around the holidays as this wine makes a wonderful aperitif or after-dinner wine to pair with light desserts. With its fun, colorful label, we think this makes a perfect gift, too! This 100% Muscat Canelli is slightly effervescent, with refreshing fruit flavors of lychee and apricot with a crisp, tart finish. A party in a glass! \*Limited Distribution\*

**Retail: \$22.00 • Reorder: \$17.50 • Cases produced: 1434 • 8.5% alc • Ageability: Drink now, while young and fresh!**

## 2010 Bedrock Cabernet Sauvignon

Bedrock Vineyard is one of Sonoma County's oldest wine properties- some of the Zin and other mixed-black vines planted here date back to 1884. It's also one of Joel's favorites and his very own. The Bordeaux varieties were mostly planted in the 1990's. They love the hot, banana-belt weather that summers bring to their little pocket in Sonoma Valley. Its soils are lean volcanic, Bedrock doesn't tend to produce monster cabs. "Bedrock fruit has very pretty aromatics and high-intensity spice", says Joel.

**Retail: \$50.00 • Reorder: \$35.00 • Cases produced: 250 • 15% alc • Ageability: 8-14 years**

The toasting cherub signifies wines going to Designations club members.



## 2010 Teldeschi Petite Sirah

A swirl of the glass displays classic dark ruby color, a purple hue, and gorgeous legs. On the nose, rich notes of ripe blackberries, currants, dark chocolate and violets round out accents of oak and spice. Black cherries, white pepper, and sweet oak on the palate, with lush tannins lending to a velvety mouth-feel and perfect balance. This wine is sure to impress Petite Sirah lovers alike.

**Retail: \$35.00 • Reorder: \$24.50 • Cases produced: 125 • 15% alc • Ageability: 3-6 years**

## 2011 Sonoma County Merlot

Vermilion in color, with complex scents of ripe loganberry, black cherry, plum, anise and vanilla spices on the nose. Enriching flavors of sweet dark cherries and mocha, this Merlot is rich and ripe. But, has the right amount of acid and tannin to keep it from being cloying or too heavy with a meal. Juicy and smoky (thanks Mike) with lush character that should charm the taster of this graceful merlot.

**Retail: \$18.50 • Reorder: \$12.95 • Cases produced: 160 • 14% alc • Ageability: 5-7 years**

## 2009 Amador County Zinfandel

East of Sacramento, elevations in the Sierra foothills of California's Gold Country range from 250 to 2900 feet. Zinfandel has been grown here since the mid-1850s, and the old vines have hung on through boom and bust cycles. Summer days are hot, often over 100 degrees, but breezes rising off the waters of the Sacramento Delta bring cool nighttime temperatures. As a result, Amador County grapes usually ripen nicely while maintaining good acids and mellow tannins that make for eminently quaffable wines. Iron and cinnabar soils add to the region's distinctive profile. Grapes for this 100% Zin were sourced from the Distasio Vineyard in Shenandoah Valley, which produces a mother lode of bright red cherry and raspberry flavors spiked with a grind of black pepper and other aromatic spices.

**Retail: \$18.00 • Reorder: \$12.60 • Cases produced: 186 • 15% alc • Ageability: Now to 5 years**

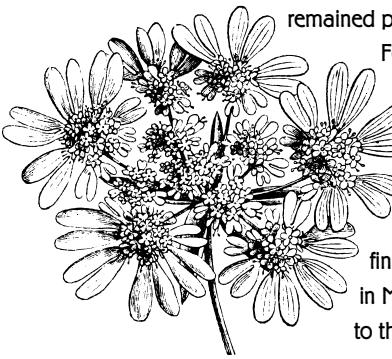
## Spring vineyards update

The winter of 2012/13 was a mild one. Though we had some big storms in December, the rain gauge

remained pretty much empty over the next few months –January and

February were the driest on record. At this point our water supply is about 75% of normal. We can make do with that.

In March I was out checking on an old Gewürztraminer vineyard up in the hills. The vines had already begun to push out leaves, which strikes me as pretty early. So in addition to finishing up the winter pruning, we also started spading in cover crop in March so the nourishing greenery doesn't suck up water and deny it to the vines.



# TING NOTES

## 2011 Napa Valley Old Vine Zinfandel

Be prepared for the full-on rush of flavors and aromas that only old vine Zinfandel from Napa Valley can deliver. This bold wine takes no prisoners with its full-bodied aromas and flavors of bright blackberry and black cherry held up by luscious notes of cocoa and baking spices. The wine finishes off with jammy fruit, dark chocolate, and lively acidity. In keeping with the weather this vintage, expect a very ripe Zin with an almost earthy quality. Try to resist pairing this wine with strong cheese, red-sauce pasta or grilled sausages. Just try.

**Retail: \$15.00 • Reorder: \$10.50 • Cases produced: 9000 • 14.5% alc • Ageability: Now to 8 years**

## 2010 Rancho Salina

Up on the rocky slopes of Moon Mountain overlooking Sonoma Valley is a very special vineyard that was once a cobblestone quarry. Dom Paino planted Bordeaux varieties here in the early '90's and named the property in honor of his immigrant parents and the Italian island where they were born. 50/50 Cabernet Franc and Merlot, beautiful oak spice with hints of vanilla, new leather, coffee, and exotic tobacco. Gentle tannins open to red and dark berry fruit, violets and vanilla bean.

**Retail: \$40.00 • Reorder: \$28.00 • Cases produced: 249 • 14% alc • Ageability: 7-12 years**

The toasting cherub signifies wines going to Designations club members.



## 2010 Estate Zinfandel, Sonoma Valley

We look at our beautiful estate vineyard on Gehricke Road every day outside the tasting room windows. And we gotta say, both the view and the wine are spectacular. The Ravenswood Estate Zin made its debut with the 2007 vintage. Joel started replanting the steep hillside bit by bit in 1995, taking out vines afflicted by phylloxera and replacing them with cuttings of five different clones from some of the best old-vine Zin vineyards in Sonoma Valley, including Old Hill and Barricia. 100% Zinfandel aged 18 months in French oak (35% new), the '10 vintage has nice round flavors. Joel likes to say it's kind of like the Cooke Zin (a mile up the road) without the attitude. A tasting room favorite, you can understand why we're so proud of this wine.

**Retail \$35.00 • Reorder \$24.50 • Cases produced: 350 • 15% alc • Ageability: 7-10 years**

The toasting cherub signifies wines going to Designations club members.



**When wine is recommended for aging, start counting from the vintage date. While the variety and style of the wine are important factors in a wine's longevity, the growing season also plays a huge role in a wine's ability to age. So check the vintage and count up. Cheers!**

## Giants Game with The D-backs

**Sunday, July 21 :: 1:00 p.m.**

Join Founding Winemaker Joel Peterson in the Audi Legends Club at AT&T park as World Series Champions, San Francisco Giants take on the Arizona Diamondbacks. Enjoy the game while feasting on a variety of foods, exclusive to this private suite of the stadium. Chat with Joel as he pours your favorite wine. \$150 per person – almost sold out!

**Please call Shanti at (866) 568-3946 for ticket reservations**

**Wine club members only.**



## Hats off to a fellow contrarian

We love this guy! And not just because he put our 2010 Napa Valley Old Vine Zin on his Spring 2013 list of Top 10 Reds.

Jon Thorsen, who hails from Minnesota's Twin Cities, is devoted to finding great wines that don't break the bank. His website, the Reverse Wine Snob, is dedicated to wines under \$20. Jon praised Ravenswood's Napa Valley Old Vine Zin: as "bold without being bombastic...The finish is very long and dry and features sweet, never-ending blackberry, lots of spice and a hint of chocolate. While this is definitely a bold wine, it is not totally overblown like a lot of Zins can be these days. (**Joel says:** "My sentiments exactly!")

Thanks, Jon!



## Upcoming Events!

### Complimentary Wine Club Appreciation BBQ

Friday, May 24 | 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The TR staff will be grilling up burgers and dogs and the Zin will be flowing! Start your Memorial Day Weekend off right! Pick up your May shipment, chat with fellow Club Members, and hang out with the Ravens for a memorable time! **Free of charge | Reservations required | [kristin.wastell@cbrands.com](mailto:kristin.wastell@cbrands.com) 707-933-2336**

### 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Tattoo Coming Out Party and Poetry Slam

Saturday, July 13 | 12:00-4:30 p.m.

Wine, tattoos and poetry- Snap, snap! Tunes by the Cork Pullers, tempting food trucks, and a grand celebration of the David Lance Goines trio of Ravens. No ink? No prob. We'll set you up with an airbrushed version that looks almost as cool as the real thing! Write a poem that declares your love for Zin, Ravens, or tattoos and we'll have a little performance art in the form of poetry. **\$15/\$10 Club Reservations required | [kristin.wastell@cbrands.com](mailto:kristin.wastell@cbrands.com) 707-933-2336**

### 2011 Vineyard Designate Release

Saturday, August 24 | 10:00-4:30 p.m.

We'll be pouring the new 2011 Vineyard Designate Zinfandels all day, and offering some special deals for our Club Members and for new sign ups. This is the Ravens favorite day of the year!

Tasting \$15/Complimentary Club | [kristin.wastell@cbrands.com](mailto:kristin.wastell@cbrands.com) 707-933-2336

### Fireside Chat and Autumn Equinox Dinner with Joel Peterson

Saturday, September 21 | 6:00-9:30 p.m. (or 'til the wolves howl)

Join Joel and gather 'round the fire for a Chat and terrific Supper under the stars! This is one you won't want to miss-we'll party 'til the wolves howl-don't miss it!

More details to come | \$100 per person/\$80 Wine Club | [kristin.wastell@cbrands.com](mailto:kristin.wastell@cbrands.com) 707-933-2336

### Pickberry Retrospective Tasting with Lorna and Cris Strotz

Saturday, October 5 | 12:00-4:30 p.m.

More details to come | \$15/Club complimentary | [kristin.wastell@cbrands.com](mailto:kristin.wastell@cbrands.com) 707-933-2336