



2019 Lodi Zinfandel, Royal Tee Vineyard

This Zinfandel is due to a combination of two factors: a fascination with the long-lived vines and Steve's time spent in the Lodi region. In 1999 Steve was hired by the Lodi Winegrape Commission to write the first book on sustainable wine grape growing, the Lodi Winegrowers Workbook. 20 years later, in 2019, the folks in Lodi asked us to make a Lodi Zinfandel to commemorate our time together. They convinced Jessie's Grove to release two tons of their oldest block of vines, the Royal Tee Vineyard, planted all the way back in 1889. 130 year old vines! Still healthy and producing beautiful fruit. It's the oldest vineyard in Lodi, and one of the oldest in the state.

Our goal with Zinfandel is always to channel the older California style of Zinfandel that used to be referred to as "California Claret," not the more contemporary "Port" style of Zinfandel that has become synonymous with the variety. The Claret style of Zinfandel is fresh and juicy, with crunchy red fruits and prominent acidity.

The Zinfandel has a brambly spicy nose of all sorts of fresh berries: raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, marionberries — you name it, a cornucopia of fresh fruit. The wine has soft tannins, but very bright acidity, zesty and clean — not the heavy Zinfandel one could expect — this one is zingy and fresh, finishing with a thread of loamy soil as a reminder that this is a serious wine.

The wine is an own-rooted field blend of all of the different varieties that the farmer included in the Zinfandel back in 1889. Zinfandel, along with 10% Carignan, 4% Flame Tokay, 0.5% Mission (Pais) and 0.5% Black Prince. The fermentation was 50% whole cluster and 50% destemmed and crushed, fermented in an open top tank, and received two manual punch downs per day. We pressed after 14 days on the skins and aged the wine in neutral Burgundy barrels for 10 months. Only native yeast.

The pH is 3.61, the TA is 5.37 g/l, and the alcohol is 14.0%. 98 cases produced.

The Vineyard

Jessie's Grove Winery's Royal Tee Vineyard is the Lodi Viticultural Area's oldest existing Zinfandel planting; planted into the (Tokay Series) fine sandy loam of Mokelumne River's west side, on its own (Zinfandel) roots, by Joseph Spenker in 1889.