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Lodi Zinfandel Goes Native

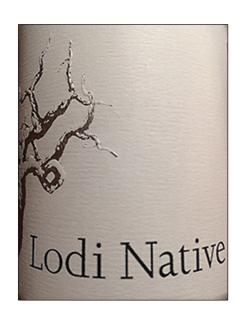
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Lodi is well-known for Zinfandel. Of particular note are its many acres of **old vines**. Thick-trunked and twisted after all these years, they look more like short trees than grape vines.

The fruit these centenarians bear is full of character, but their unique traits are sometimes masked by new oak and other winemaking choices intended to please contemporary wine lovers. So, unlike Pinot Noir vineyard-designates often made with a minimum of intervention to expose distinct terroir, even super-premium Zinfandel wines don't necessarily reveal all the unique characteristics of particular old vine plots. This makes it hard to know exactly how excited we should really be about those vineyards.

The Lodi Native project addresses that problem directly. It presents single-vineyards of distinction from Lodi's **Mokelumne River AVA** in wines that are skillfully made, but not "crafted." I tasted the project's first 6 wines. The differences between each were dramatic. The wines are beautiful. They compelled me to open my wallet, a much harder task these days than it used to be.



What is Lodi Native?

Lodi Native is a serious effort by six winemakers to let heritage vineyards speak clearly through "sensible viticulture

and minimalist wine outset to define a wi challenges and critic and brand-styles in

Lodi Native is a serious effort by six winemakers to let heritage vineyards speak clearly through "sensible viticulture and minimalist winemaking".

Here are some of

- 100% Zinfandel from (except when a part of the content of the conten
- Native-yeast fermemation for primary and majoractic remientation
- No new oak or inner staves
- · No oak substitutes such as chips or powder
- · No addition of water or subtraction of alcohol
- · No addition or reduction of acid
- · No added tannins
- No added color or concentrates, including Mega-Purple
- No fining or filtration
- No must concentration, Flash Détante or similar extraction measures

This was a risky project. The winemakers couldn't use commonly accepted measures to counteract issues with the grapes or production. Some winemakers hadn't relied solely on native fermentation before, so they didn't know what surprises the peculiar strains in their vineyard and winery would bring. There was no oak "spice box" to cover minor flaws.