



Lodi Native: Master Class in Old Vine Zin



Posted by Isaac Baker | Posted on 09-13-2014

When I heard about Lodi Native, I was instantly intrigued. Old vines, historic vineyards, minimalist winemaking, indigenous yeasts, no new oak, no fining or filtration. What's not to love?

Through this collaborative effort, a group of winegrowers and vintners in the Mokelumne River AVA seeks to reclaim Lodi's heritage by crafting complex, terroir-driven Zinfandels. The fruit comes from very old vines, some dating back to the late 1800s.

The team has released six wines from the 2012 vintage, all from Lodi's Mokelumne River AVA. Tasting all six together, I was stunned by the tremendous variation in flavors and textures, and found it fascinating to dissect my perceptions of each wine. They're all very high quality, and picking a favorite comes down to personal preference.

Collectively, these are some of the most thought-provoking Zinfandels I've tasted in a very long time. They're deep, complex, lingering, surprisingly elegant and quite food-friendly. They comprise a master class in old vine Lodi Zinfandel.

The wines are only sold as a group; a six-bottle case goes for \$180. They were received as trade samples and tasted single blind.



92 points

2012 Lodi Native Zinfandel Noma Ranch- Lodi Mokelumne River

Winemaker, Tim Holdener (Macchia Wines) | Grower, Leland Noma

Black cherry colored. On the nose, a mix of dark fruit (blackberries and black cherries) with cranberry and strawberries, some roses, sweet barbecue sauce and black pepper. On the palate, this wine is juicy and freshly textured with fine acid. Charcoal and pepper accent the ripe black cherries, Bordeaux cherries and strawberries. Notes of black tea and crushed rocks mix with sweet spice and barbecue sauce. Fresh, juicy, but complex, dare I say elegant? You can just taste the old vines in this juice. So easy to drink, not overdone at all. Quite gorgeous. A Zinfandel for the open-minded, the nerd, the adventurous.

91 points

2012 Lodi Native Zinfandel The Century Block Vineyard- Lodi Mokelumne River

Winemaker, Ryan Sherman (Fields Family Wines)

Light ruby-cherry colored. Lovely nose of crunchy red berries (cranberries, strawberries and sour cherries), some notes of sweet roses and rhubarb mixed in with some cracked pepper. On the palate, this is fruit-forward but bright with silky tannins and medium acid. The raspberry and strawberry fruit is fresh and tangy. Notes of white pepper and soy blend with roses and rhubarb. There's a lovely silkiness to this wine; it has such a very restrained and approachable style. Long, gorgeous finish with notes of meat and pickles. Honestly, while tasting, the thought crossed my mind: maybe — just maybe! — someone slipped some Pinot into this Zin. 14% alcohol. From a 3-acre vineyard planted in 1905.