Until recently, Zinfandel was California’s "mystery grape" because its origins were unknown. DNA fingerprinting has confirmed Italy’s Primitivo and Crljenak Kastelanski, an ancient Croatian variety, are genetically identical to Zinfandel grapes with slight differences in vine vigor and cluster.

Differences in cultivation, terroir and winemaking combine to give Zinfandel its own particular flavor profile with a truly American name, history and style.

Zinfandel was introduced to California during the Gold Rush between 1852 and 1857 and became widely planted because it thrived so well in the state’s warm climate and soil. Today, Zinfandel is the third-leading winegrape variety in California.

By the middle of the 19th century Zinfandel was established in northern California and prized for its productivity. It was the most planted dark-skinned grape variety of the West Coast until usurped by the more glamorous and, significantly, more obviously French, Cabernet Sauvignon in the second half of the 20th century.

Popular descriptors for red Zinfandel include blackberry, raspberry, boysenberry, cherry, as well as black pepper, cloves, anise and herbs.

A younger generation is curious about red wines other than Cabernet and Pinot Noir. Of course, they’re looking all over the world, but Zinfandel is right in their back yard, an American classic.

Sommeliers always have a soft spot for varieties that make good wine, but aren’t necessarily appreciated. Zinfandel has just the right balance of geeky and accessible.

Zin is a marvelous matchup for grilled meats, but also for the wide range of spicy ethnic fare that’s so popular today. Mexican, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Indian, Ethiopian, Cuban—if its beef or chicken, grilled and spicy, Zin will love it.

Zinfandel prices have remained fair. The variety hasn’t exploded in cost, like Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Zinfandel is deliciously fruity, which people like, and it’s full-bodied. But the tannins are smooth and supple, not hard, like Cabernet’s.

There’s a Zin for every palate. There are high-alcohol Zins that are blood-warming and heady, if that’s what you want. There are Zins below 14% for the lower-alcohol crowd. And everything in between.

Winemakers have gotten very good at making more balanced Zins than in the past. A big part of that is more sophisticated sorting of berries. Zinfandel is cleaner than ever.

Zin just sort of has something special going for it. Everybody’s heard about it and knows the name; it has good vibes. People don’t have negative associations with it; they’re willing to try it, especially on a personal recommendation.
2013 ZINFANDEL

APPELLATION. California

COMPOSITION. 100% Zinfandel

ALCOHOL. 15%

PH. 3.55

TA. 0.60 g/100ml

TASTING NOTES. Our H. Mynors Zinfandel is deep ruby in color and displays aromas of cranberries, violets, brown sugar and vanilla. On the palate, it is rich and spicy, offering flavors of cranberries, black pepper and bright red fruit that integrate with hints of oak spices which coat the palate. The round soft tannins and sweet oak balance lead to a long and lingering finish.

WINEMAKING NOTES. This unique Zinfandel blend is from sites in Sonoma Valley, Dry Creek Valley, Amador County and Lodi. The grapes were harvested at optimal maturity, then de-stemmed and gently crushed into stainless steel fermenters, at warm temperatures, to fully extract color and flavor. The fermented wine was racked to French oak for 12 months of aging, of which 15% was new oak. During the aging process the wine lots were tasted throughout and blended together just before bottling.

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