



## **FEBRUARY 2018**

Hello Bootleg Society Members!

Do old vines make better wines? What is the definition of an old vine? Like all terms in the wine world, they tend to get abused. Estate, reserve, old vine, authentic, hand-crafted, natural, and the list goes on of terms that have been co-opted for marketing purposes. At the end of the day, a customer ultimately needs to trust their winery, and believe the people that are making the wine, and any claims they may make. But back to the original question – do old vines make better wines? And in my opinion, they make better wines for several reasons.

First, let's consider it from a viticultural perspective. And just for the record, my definition of an old vine is a vineyard that is 50 years of age or older. There is no legal definition. For the most part, an old vine is self-regulating. It grew vigorously in its youth, produced large crops, and has settled into a natural state of balance with its surroundings. You can achieve this with younger vines, but it requires more manipulation in the vineyard through irrigation, trellising, shoot-thinning, crop-thinning, etc. An old vine finds its balance more naturally, produces a smaller crop with more intensity, flavor, and sense of place.

From a pure practical and economic perspective, a vineyard that has been farmed for 50, 75, or 100+ years has proven its ability to consistently produce high quality wines. And this track record of success keeps those vineyards in the ground.

Wine is also more than the sum of its parts. We love wines not merely for the hedonistic or intellectual value they deliver, but the emotional connection they make. A wine can connect with a place, a moment in time, a person, a party, a memory. It is this emotional value that truly makes old vines special. An old vine also has cultural value. They are a living history that is worth listening to. Walking these vineyards, you can see the history of our community. Marian's Vineyard was planted in 1901. So much has changed since then, but there she stands as a reminder, a connection to our past, and guide for our future.

This wine club is about celebrating old vines, and those that have the vision and commitment to keep them alive.

Cheers!  
Stuart Spencer

# FEBRUARY 2018 WINE CLUB

## 2016 Mohr-Fry Ranch Old Vine Zinfandel - Lodi

The 2016 celebrates our 21<sup>st</sup> vintage of our iconic, and classic Mohr-Fry Ranch Old Vine Lodi Zinfandel. This wine started out as a simple experiment, and has grown to be our most popular and widely-sold wine. 2016 was an early vintage, at the end of our drought, but a fairly robust crop. The wine is a blend of five separate blocks planted from 1901 to 1944. All head-trained and own rooted. The vintage delivered a spicy, peppery old vine zin. Deep red and black fruit flavors with an underlying smoky toast - a delicious Old Vine Zin!

**Gold Medal – 2018 American Fine Wine Competition**

**\$18 / Wine Club - \$15.30 / Case Club - \$14.40 / 2446 cases**

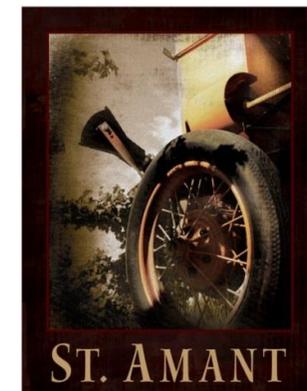


## 2016 Marian's Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel – Lodi

After several light vintages, we welcomed a few more grapes on the vines in 2016. It was still a relatively early harvest kicking off at the beginning of September. We usually pick this 115-year-old vineyard several times, at varying degrees of ripeness resulting in more nuanced flavors in the final blend. 2016 is shaping up to be a great vintage. At first the wine was fairly tight and closed, but it's opening up to spicy, floral, perfumed red fruit aromas. The aromas follow through on the palate with rich spicy raspberry and black berry flavors. A real winner!

**Gold Medal – 2018 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.**

**\$24 / Wine Club - \$20.40 / Case Club - \$19.20 / 331 cases**



## 2015 Mohr-Fry Ranch Petite Sirah - Lodi

This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> vintage of the Mohr-Fry Ranch Petite Sirah, and it is as delicious as the first. The vineyard is situated directly across from Marian's Vineyard and was planted in the mid-1990's. Picked in late September, it delivers delicious berry fruit, characteristically dark, but with a nice spicy savory finish. The label features Bruce Fry's ever-present yellow lab Summer, and for many, the label only makes it worth buying. We only bottled 65 cases and I'm sure it will go quick. Enjoy!

**Gold Medal – 2017 Orange County Fair**

**Gold Medal – 2017 LA International Wine Competition**

**\$21 / Wine Club - \$17.85 / Case Club - \$16.80 / 214 cases**



## 2016 Barbera, Leventini Vineyard - Lodi

There is value in experience. This is our 19<sup>th</sup> vintage of Barbera crafted from the Leventini Vineyard planted in 1972. The vineyard is showing its age and at times looks like hell. It has spurs sticking out everywhere, it sets unevenly, and produces an irregular crop. It is the most difficult variety to pick, tiny leaves are everywhere, and the fruit tends to look haggard. Most winemakers would run in horror. But! Year in and year out this ugly duck produces absolutely delicious wines. 2016 was one of those years. I wondered (to myself) if 2016 would be the last year of this wine, but once in the cellar, it did its magic. I would like to take credit, but sometimes winemaking works in mysterious ways. The Barbera has bright fresh flavors of cranberries, dried cherries, and wet earth. Exceptional balance and delicious up-front fruit. A real winner. And a great price!

**Gold Medal – 2018 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition**

**\$18 / Wine Club - \$15.30 / Case Club - \$14.40 / 661 cases**

