



FEBRUARY 2019

Hello Bootleg Society Members!

Last week I opened a bottle of our 2002 Marian's Vineyard Zinfandel. I was curious to see how it was evolving, and at 16 years of age, it showed beautifully. Aromatically it was very pretty with spice, dried fruits, and a liveliness that I just couldn't set aside. On the palate it was focused with delicious fruit and spice, and a lengthy finish that just lingered. It was not a wine to gulp down at the end of a bad day, but a wine to sit back, relax, and enjoy the moment.

Aging wines is not for everyone. We don't all have proper storage, and many of us prefer the delicious fruit of more youthful wines. And after about 4-5 years a wine will start to shed some of that fruit and more savory elements will start to emerge. All wines age, but the real question is if they evolve into something you enjoy.

But to me, drinking an older wine is much more than just what's in the glass. It can take you back in time – to the moment the grapes were harvested, fermented, and bottled. What was I doing in 2002? Where was my life at? My oldest daughter was two, my youngest hadn't been born. We were new homeowners with empty closets and no furniture. The wine business was struggling. Overplanting in the 1990's and the recession following 9/11 made it difficult to sell wine and grapes. It was tough. The Lodi wine scene was in its infancy. There were maybe 10-12 wineries. Each of us forging new territory and laying the groundwork for the vibrant Lodi wine community we have today.

The 2002 Marian's Zin was made by my dad who passed away in 2006. I helped. I was always a good source of free labor and loved the physical aspects of making the wine. We had rudimentary equipment that was temperamental. It was a lot of work to get a little bit done. But we persevered and made good wines that clearly stand the test of time. I learned a lot about making wine back then. I learned that the best tools don't make the best wines, but that the best grapes, with proper care, and gentle hands can make great wines.

I hope you enjoy this month's wine club selections. Each has a story to tell, and maybe in 16 years we can all enjoy a bottle of our 2017 Marian's Vineyard Zinfandel. Or just drink them all now because life is short.

Cheers!

Stuart Spencer

FEBRUARY 2019 WINE CLUB

2017 Mohr-Fry Ranch Old Vine Zinfandel - Lodi

As a winemaker you tend to remember the more challenging vintages, and 2017 will clearly have a foothold in my memory bank. As the Zins were just about ready to harvest, an epic heat wave rolled across California. We saw sugars jump from 24 to 29 brix in less than a week. The old vines are particularly susceptible to this type of heat stress. We scrambled to get them picked. It required a lot of sorting, but the final wines turned out delicious. The 2017 Mohr-Fry Zin clearly shows the vintage with big ripe fruit, but also has a classic spiciness that is a signature of the vineyard.

Silver Medal – 2019 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

\$18 / Wine Club - \$15.30 / Case Club - \$14.40 / 1972 cases

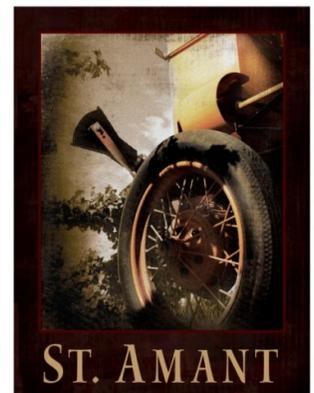


2017 Marian's Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel – Lodi

We started picking the 8.3 acre Marian's Vineyard planted in 1901 on September 1st and finished four days later. We ended up with just under 20 tons or approximately 2.3 tons/acre and divided it up into four separate fermentation lots. Our final "Marian's Vineyard Zin" is the best barrels from the best lots, and carefully chosen to deliver a consistent style from vintage to vintage. That said, it clearly shows the signs of the vintage. At this point, it's a bigger and riper version of our Marian's with sweet fruit that fills the mouth, and hints of spice, perfumed black and red fruits, and a rich flavor-packed palate. A decadent wine!

Gold Medal – 2019 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

\$24 / Wine Club - \$20.40 / Case Club - \$19.20 / 318 cases

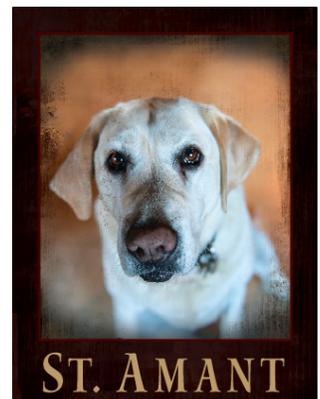


2016 Mohr-Fry Ranch Petite Sirah - Lodi

The Mohr-Fry Ranch Petite Sirah vineyard is situated directly across from Marian's Vineyard but was planted in the mid-1990's on split canopy trellis system. Picked in late September, it delivers delicious berry fruit, characteristically dark, but with a nice spicy savory finish. The wine is a quintessential Lodi wine and classic Mohr-Fry Ranch Petite Sirah. It has all the guts one expects in Petite but with the balance and complexity you get from Mohr-Fry Ranch. The label features Bruce Fry's ever-present yellow lab Summer, and for many, the label alone makes it worth buying!

Gold Medal – 2019 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

\$21 / Wine Club - \$17.85 / Case Club - \$16.80 / 334 cases



2017 Barbera, Leventini Vineyard - Lodi

This is our 20th vintage of Barbera crafted from the Leventini Vineyard planted in 1972. Not the prettiest vineyard, but year in and year out this ugly duck produces absolutely delicious wines. 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, delicious up-front fruit, and packed with flavor. A real winner. And a great price!

Double Gold Medal – 2019 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

\$18 / Wine Club - \$15.30 / Case Club - \$14.40 / 857 cases

