

California GRAPEVINE



Vol. 27, No. 2

April-May 2001

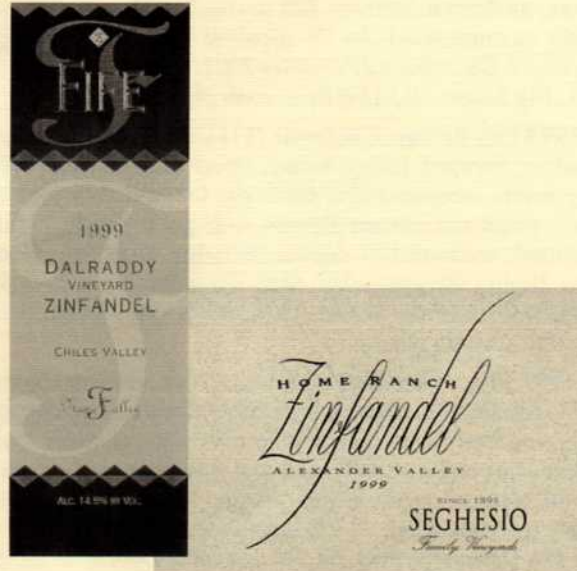
IN THIS ISSUE

Tasting Notes on New Releases

Zinfandel	Page 21
Cabernet Sauvignon	26
Merlot	28
Syrah	29
Chardonnay	30
Sauvignon Blanc	32
Sangiovese	33
Pinot Noir	34
Commentary by Dan Berger	36
In the Wine Library by Bob Foster	38
Grapevine Recommendations	40

ZINFANDEL

New Releases



1. **1999 Seghesio, "Home Ranch,"** Alexander Valley (\$28)–Medium-dark ruby color; attractive, forward, rich, spicy, jammy, sweet ripe currant and blackberry fruit aroma with overtones of dill and creamy oak; full body; big, forward, intense, rich, delicious, concentrated, briary, jammy, high-extract, ripe blackberry and boysenberry fruit flavors with a full mouth feel; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Developed with airing in the glass. Very highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 1,900 cases; blended with 10% Carignane and 5% Petite Sirah (PS); released March 2001.* (Group Score: 16.4 of 20 points, 6 of 15 first-place votes/2 seconds/0 thirds; My Score: 17 [92 of 100 points], first place)

and creamy oak flavors; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. An Advanced Tasting Program (ATP) release only available from the winery. *14.4% alcohol; 815 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released April 2001.* (Group Score: 16.0, 1/3/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

2. **1999 Fife, "Dalraddy Vineyard,"** Chiles Valley, Napa Valley (\$28) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, floral, spicy, briary, jammy, slightly peppery, sweet red cherry and red berry fruit aroma that developed with airing in the glass; full body; big, plush, jammy, supple, ripe blackberry and raspberry fruit flavors with good depth and a tight, slightly tart core; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 950 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released February 2001.* (Group Score: 16.3, 4/4/3; My Score: 17 [90/100], third place)

5. **1999 Peachy Canyon Winery, "Incredible Red, Bin 110,"** California (\$11) – Medium ruby; pleasant, floral, earthy, briary, strawberry and raspberry fruit aroma with distinct varietal character; medium-full body; briary, herbal, raspberry and sweet cherry fruit flavors; well balanced; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very enjoyable to drink now. Good value. Highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 9,519 cases; blended with 3% Cabernet Sauvignon (CS) and 0.5% Barbera; released October 2000.* (Group Score: 15.8, 3/1/0; My Score: 16.5 [85/100], ninth place)

3. **1999 Brown Estate, Napa Valley** (\$32)–Medium ruby; attractive, forward, floral, spicy, briary, jammy, sweet wild berry fruit aroma with hints of tobacco and vanilla; medium-full body; rich, spicy, plummy, briary, ripe berry fruit flavors; well balanced with firm acidity; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows distinctive varietal character. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 1,000 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released January 2001.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/3/5; My Score: 17 [91/100], second place)

6. **1999 Fife, "Old Vines,"** Napa Valley (\$22.50)–Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, rich, intense, chocolatey, slightly briary, ripe blackberry and black cherry fruit aroma with a hint of tobacco; medium-full body; somewhat coarse and slightly harsh berry fruit flavors; medium-full tannin; rough, tart finish; lingering aftertaste. Shows a lot of oak. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 2,800 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released February 2001.* (Group Score: 15.7, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [86/100], eighth place)

4. **1999 Ridge, "Dusi Ranch,"** Paso Robles (\$25)–Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, rich, intense, cedary, toasty, jammy, sweet black cherry and berry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla and coconut; full body; big, intense, concentrated, high-extract, briary, jammy, ripe red currant

7. **1999 Beaulieu Vineyard, Napa Valley** (\$14)–Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, plummy, sweet red berry fruit aroma with notes of creamy oak and black pepper; medium-full to full body; forward, plush, silky, slightly peppery, ripe

Continued on Page 22

Zinfandel

Zinfandel (continued from page 21)

red berry fruit flavors with notes of charred oak; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Enjoyable to drink now. Highly recommended. 14.6% alcohol; 12,000 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released December 2000. (Group Score: 15.7, 0/1/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

8. **1999 Truchard**, Carneros, Napa Valley (\$28)—Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, floral, very spicy, cedary, briary, peppery, ripe boysenberry and raspberry fruit aroma with hints of eucalyptus and mint; medium-full body; forward, rich, spicy, slightly tart, peppery, red berry fruit flavors; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. 14.1% alcohol; 422 cases; blended with 12.5% CS; released February 2001. (Group Score: 15.7, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

9. **1999 Moss Bridge**, California (\$11)—Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, toasty, briary, sweet raspberry and wild berry aroma; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, jammy, briary, sweet red currant flavors with good depth; tightly structured; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Good value. Highly recommended. *Stats not available in time for publication.* (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/3; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], seventh place)

10. **1999 Fife**, "Mendocino Uplands," Mendocino County (\$17)—Medium to medium-dark ruby; floral, spicy, slightly briary, red berry fruit aroma with overtones of toasty oak; medium-full body; slightly rich and jammy, toasty, ripe red currant flavors; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. 14.5% alcohol; 6,500 cases; blended with 5% Carignane and 3% PS; released December 2000. (Group Score: 15.4, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [85/100], tenth place)

11. **1999 Fife**, "Whaler Vineyard," Mendocino County (\$20) Medium to medium-dark ruby; briary, spicy, plummy, sweet berry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla and a detracting hint of sulfur; medium-full body; tight, tart, toasty, plummy, moderately rich berry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; slightly bitter on the finish; lingering aftertaste. 14.5% alcohol; 1,462 cases; blended with 5% PS; released February 2001. (Group Score: 14.9, 0/0/0; My Score: 15.5 [79/100], eleventh place)

12. **1999 Forchini Vineyards & Winery**, "Papa Nonno, Old Vine Clone," Dry Creek Valley (\$20)—Medium to medium-dark ruby; forward, toasty, plummy, ripe black cherry and berry fruit aroma with hints of green olive and leather; medium-full body; rich, concentrated, jammy, briary, cedary, ripe red currant and blackberry fruit flavors; lingering aftertaste. Shows a barnyardy character. 13.9% alcohol; 1,084 cases; blended with 11% Carignane; released April 2001. (Group Score: 14.6, 0/0/0; My Score: 15.5 [79/100], twelfth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4] [5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10] [11, 12]

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

THIS APRIL-MAY 2001 ISSUE was mailed to subscribers on April 16th. Our next June-July 2001 issue will continue to update you on the newest releases of premium California, Oregon, and Washington wines. We will also start our annual coverage of the 2001 wine competition results. The June-July issue will be mailed to subscribers in mid-June.



ABOUT OUR TASTING NOTES

OUR TASTING NOTES are the result of weekly double-blind tastings held in San Diego and sponsored by the *California Grapevine*. Our scoring system is based on a 20-point scale. My own adaption of the 20-point scale uses a six point range of the scale (13 through 18 points) with 0.5 point increments providing eleven possible ratings. I also include a score based on a 100-point scale using the following criteria:

"My Score" Based on 20 Points	100-Point Equivalent Score	Quality Description
17-18	90-100	Outstanding
16-16.5	80-89	Good to very good
15-15.5	70-79	Average to good
14-14.5	60-69	Below Average
13-13.5	50-59	Poor

While a score given on a 100-point scale may infer a high degree of precision in evaluating a wine, the threshold for repeatability generally falls within one or two points for even the best palate. One or two points difference between wines should not be considered significant.

The group score and the number of first, second, and third-place votes appear, along with my (editor Nick Ponomareff's) own scores and relative ranking, in parentheses after the comments on each wine. (Note that the group score is an average of all tasters and its value doesn't necessarily equate to the 20-point criteria presented above. The group score should be interpreted as merely an indication of group preference.)

A "True Ranking" based on a statistical analysis of the results appears at the end of each set of tasting notes. Wines that do not differ significantly from one another are grouped in brackets.

Pertinent information about each wine (including the alcohol content, the number of cases produced, varietal composition, and release date) is also included with the tasting notes.

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