



ZaZin 2013: A study in symbiosis

Question: Which photo is of zinfandel and which of petite sirah?

ZaZin has traditionally been a blend of zinfandel and petite sirah. This is because neither grape stands on its own and both grapes together are greater than the sum of their individual parts. One hundred percent zinfandel can be simple and overly fruity, light colored, and soft and 100% petite sirah can be one dimensional, opaquely dark, and tannic. Mix the two together, and each varietal mollifies the excesses or mitigates the deficiencies of the other.

The blending process may go like this. Start with 100% zinfandel and add, say, 10% petite sirah. You will see the color become noticeably darker; the hard, tobacco-y taste of the PS tames the tiresome fruitiness of the zinfandel; and the mouthfeel develops some grip. Add some more PS and the change continues pretty much proportionally. Keep going till you go over the top and then back off. That's your starting point. Now blind taste the trial blends weekly over a couple of months.

We generally find that we end up with around a 80/20 blend, and this is what the blend of the 2013 ZaZin happens to be. The result? A dark, complex, focused, spicy, robust, and intriguing wine that matches great with hearty foods.

(On yeah: zinfandel on left and PS on right).