

From: The BrightWines Beacon <lighthouse@brightwines.com>
Subject: fresh and new for June, and "last chance" wines too
Date: June 9, 2016 3:03:39 PM CDT
To: The BrightWines Beacon

The BrightWines Beacon for June 3rd, 2016: fresh and new for June, and some "last chance" wines too

Fresh and new, some things just go together...

"Wine and cheese are ageless companions, like aspirin and aches, or June and moon, or good people and noble ventures." M.F.K. Fisher

- ** NEW arrival: **91-point rated Old Vines Garnacha from Spain** - one shipment only - at **\$14.99 per bottle**.
- ** **the LAST of the 2012 vintage** (91 points, 92 points, and 90 points) Trivento **GOLDEN RESERVE Malbec**
- ** in case you missed it: the **very popular Zinfandel feature** from Memorial Day weekend - see The View from the Top.
- ** **NEW fresh bottlings of favorite VINHO VERDE** (one frizzante, one a regular white wine "vinho branco" style).

See today's Bright Lights section today for what's new and fresh, and highly rated, and even a "last chance" wine, plus "back the basics" with my **BEST sub-\$15 priced California Cabernet** (and Chardonnay too) both re-stocked and ready to roll!

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: the story of those Zany and Zinful Zinfandel names

(in case you missed it, it's only June but this is a "summer rerun" of a recent popular article and feature that I know many of you missed over the holiday weekend for Memorial Day)

You wouldn't know it by looking at the shelves in the Zinfandel aisle nowadays, but Zinfandel as a red wine used to be thought of as a serious dinner-style and cellar-worthy dry red from California. Even sometimes pronounced Zin-FAN-dle, in a sort of upper crust, east-coast or British way, instead of the more common ZIN-fan-DELL. The idea of a "claret style" Zinfandel, or a cellar-worthy Zinfandel, or Zinfandel as an alternative dinner red, was very much expected. In fact, I once participated in a sampling of aged Zinfandels by great and famous Ridge winery, known for their old vines Lytton Spring vineyard and their field-blend Zinfandel red from Geyserville. The wines were nearly 20 years old on the aged end, and still very drinkable. One of my own personal wine quotes that became infamous within certain circles was my comment about the most mature Ridge Zinfandel having notes of "telephone poles." That would have been 20 years ago now, and the wines were from the 70's and 80's. The point is that back then, most winemakers made Zinfandel that were to be taken more seriously.

Things have changed a bit, although there are still plenty of very serious Zinfandel wines and Zinfandel fans. What's more common over the past couple of decades are Zinfandel wines with clever puns and zany "zinful" nicknames. For today, I am going to talk just about the Zinfandel name (don't get me started on the bevy of goofy, some clever, nickname red blends out there). Zinfandel is probably to blame for the popularity of these sorts of names. The obvious puns on Zin are many, and quite possibly the first one - and one of the most commercially successful examples - is the "Sin Zin" by Alexander Valley Vineyards. I was recently at a small private wine tasting gathering where the lead speaker was Katie Wetzel Murphy, one of the owners of Alexander Valley Vineyards, who happens to be the person who suggested the name "Sin Zin" and the artwork that goes with it back when AVV (then, as now, AVV is a family winery operation) first introduced a Zinfandel named Sin Zin in 1978 with a label taken from an old German engraving found by chance. "Why not call it Sin Zin?" she said. From here, I'll let a recent Washington Post article take over the story.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/the-lure-of-sin-zins/2014/08/04/f46e6784-1678-11e4-9e3b-7f2f110c6265_story.html

"Over the years, California wineries have had fun with wordplay on "zin." The mayhem might have begun in 1978 with the Wetzel family of Alexander Valley Vineyards in Sonoma County. Although they bottled cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay under their winery's label, at that time they sold their zinfandel grapes to other producers. Late that fall, after all their clients had claimed their crop, Hank Wetzel noticed several vines with grapes still hanging. He picked them, made the wine and bottled it. His sister, Katie Wetzel Murphy, was in charge of marketing. She named the wine Sin Zin and, for the label, chose an old German painting of a scantily clad person frolicking in a bacchanalian way. The Wetzels gave the wine from that first vintage to friends and relatives. You can probably fill in the history from there: Those who tasted the wine loved it and demanded more. Within a few vintages, the Wetzels were marketing Sin Zin commercially. For five years in the mid-1980s, they dropped the moniker in favor of their Alexander Valley Vineyards estate name. But customers complained, so they brought it back. Today, Alexander Valley Vineyards markets a trinity of zins: Temptation, a California blend; Sin Zin, from their estate vineyards in Alexander Valley; and Redemption, from Dry Creek Valley... Naturally, other wineries joined in on the fun. Randall Grahm, founder of Bonny Doon Vineyard and perhaps California's slyest and most subversive winemaker, created Cardinal Zin. (Bonny Doon no longer owns

the Cardinal Zin brand.) Michael David Winery markets 7 Deadly Zins, a blend of zinfandel from seven older vineyards. These playful names and risqué labels are intended, of course, to make the wine stand out from a sea of bottles on a retail shelf."

That article mentions some of the more famous ones, to which here at BrightWines over the years you can add The Immortal Zin, ZinZilla, Zinister, and others to the range of Sin Zin and 7 Deadly Zin wines. Those wines have all been very good wines, good Zins with fun names. There are still plenty of good Zinfandel wines from with more staid brand names. Back in the day folks used to think of the "three R's" of Zinfandel, Ridge, Ravenswood, and Rosenblum (to which some added a 4th "R" which was Renwood) and of course the many California wineries in Dry Creek, Lodi, Paso Robles, Napa, et al, that make Zinfandel under a range of classy to zany sorts of brand names. So why write about this topic, this week? This is the time of year when I traditionally have my BEST pricing of the year on two perennial favorites, both Sin Zin by Alexander Valley Vineyards and also 7 Deadly Zins by Michael & David in Lodi. Add to that the sale pricing I have going on The Immortal Zin, and the 375ml of PARADUXX Zinfandel blend by Duckhorn in Napa Valley, and we are cornering the market on some of the best examples of these fun Zinfandel wine names. Here are some great examples still in-stock (at SALE prices) from the recent features over Memorial Day weekend. Supplies may be low on some of these recent favorites, so if you are a fan - grab your favorites soon!

SIN ZIN 2013 Alexander Valley ZINFANDEL @ \$12.99 per bottle (sale price)

The original "zinfu" name! New vinage is my favorite in years, and the Wine Spectator also just recommended it too (coincidentally calling it zesty) at a \$20 retail price. The \$12.99 per bottle sale price is a once-per-year feature, so if you are a fan - get yours now! Wine Spectator notes: "\$20 retail. "A zesty, fun quaff, with lively flavors of dried cherry. 88 points."

RENWOOD 2012 (Amador, California) ZINFANDEL @ \$12.99 per bottle (sale price)

Famously one of the "R" Zinfandel producers. This regular bottling is soft/spicy and juicy with cranberry-raisin and stawberry tones.

7 DEADLY ZINS 2013 old vine Lodi ZINFANDEL @ \$11.99 per bottle (sale price)

Rated 90 points by Robert Parker's Wine Advocate! Also highly recommended by Wine Enthusiast magazine, who notes: "This full-bodied wine has a deep color and smoke and charcoal aromas. The flavors are ripe, concentrated, grapy and berry-like. The texture has moderate tannins but is polished around the edges. It's a big and rowdy wine that doesn't lose control. \$16 retail."

The IMMORTAL ZIN 2013 old vine Lodi (Peirano estate Zinfandel) @ \$7.99 per bottle (sale price)

Lighter-bodied and less mocha/smoky oak than "7 Deadly" but smooth and purple-fruited. Peirano sells Zin to 7 Deadly too!

REDEMPTION (by A.V.V.) 2013 Dry Creek ZINFANDEL @ \$16.67 per bottle (sale price)

"Redemption" for the price that the Sin normally sells for. More peppery and oaky/chewy, classic Dry Creek Zin.

SIMPLE SOLACE 2013 PASO ROBLES Zinfandel/Sangiovese blend @ \$17.99 per bottle (sale price)

Mostly Zin, but with a decent amount of Sangiovese in the blend, drinks like a Paso Robles version of Rosso di Montalcino!

RENWOOD 2012 "Fiddletown" ZINFANDEL @ \$19.99 per bottle (sale price)

old vine, Fiddletown AVA in Amador / Sierra Foothills. If you are a fan, I don't need to say more!

Duckhorn PARADUXX 2011 Napa Valley Zinfandel blend (375ml) @ \$12.99 per bottle (sale price)

Suggested Retail: \$48 (see W.E.) for the full-size standard bottle = two halves is 45% off retail for one whole!

Wine Enthusiast notes: "\$48 retail. 67% Zinfandel, followed by 28% Cabernet Sauvignon and a small handful of Merlot. Aged in both French and American oak, less than half of it new, it's soft and quite tannic, with Zin's rightful spicy red fruit at its core. (April 2015 issue) AND Wine Spectator notes: "A savory red blend, with aromas of black cherry and bay leaf complementing the firm flavors of plum, mineral, herb and cedar. Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2018." (HALF BOTTLES ONLY on supplier clearance)

BRIGHT LIGHTS: fresh and new for June, and a "last chance" wine too!

** the LAST of the 2012 vintage (great vintage, great wine) of top-rated Trivento GOLDEN RESERVE Malbec **

91 points Wine Spectator and ranked as #1 Top Value of Argentina - and 92 points Wine Enthusiast - and 90 points RP too!

I have featured this wine a few times over the past year or so, and each time it was a huge hit. The first shipments were exclusive-to-BrightWines deals and pre-arrival shipments, then as the ball got rolling the importer/wholesaler began putting deals aside for me. So fast-

forward to this spring, I asked the supplier to give me a quick heads-up when their supply got near the end of the vintage. And after I noticed the newer 2013 vintage getting a 90-point rating (once again) in the June 2016 Wine Spectator, I asked about stocks and we got the answer we figured was soon to come.

Nothing wrong with the 2013, it's a 90-pointer in the new June 2016 issue, but reading between the lines of the reviews and looking at the scores - I wanted **one last shot at the 2012 vintage** that we all loved! I just received **the LAST 25 six-pack cases available** from the supplier before a change in vintage (and a change in supplier too).

Trivento GOLDEN RESERVE 2012 Lujan de Cuyo - Mendoza MALBEC @ \$16.67 per bottle (\$95.95 / 6pk case = \$15.99 ea)

Suggested Retail: \$21 (see both W.S. and W.E.)

mix/match cases - or solid six-packs (at \$95.95 / 6pk) is a 25% savings off the \$21 retail, just **\$15.99 per bottle!**

Wine Spectator listed this as the #1 Top Value out of 400 wines reviewed for their special report on Argentina!

Wine Spectator notes: "Ripe and rich with a core of plum, kirsch, and cocoa powder flavors. Well-structured, featuring medium-grain tannins and a long finish. \$21. **91 points.**" -- AND --

Wine Enthusiast notes: 92 points! "this is showing pure berry power on the nose. Lush and intense but also bright and balanced in feel, this Malbec is pumping out fleshy blackberry flavors offset by meaty notes. A full, mellow finish is deep and pure, with absorbed oak. Drink through 2020. \$21. 92 points. May 2015 issue."

DAVE says: in-stock now, first come first served and I will confirm email orders as best I can this weekend (while supplies last). This 91 - 92 point rated Malbec is from prime Lujan de Cuyo vineyards by one of the most reliable wineries, Trivento, of the region and has been the best Malbec (and one of my best reds, period) of the past year. For good measure, it's also 90-point rated by Robert Parker's Wine Advocate too!

**** RE-STOCKED customer (and Dave) FAVORITES ****

Michael & David 2014 Lodi Chardonnay @ \$12.99 per bottle (sale price)

From the "7 Deadly Zins" guys (see above article on the zinfu Zinfandel names) comes this very classy (with a classy label too) and classic California Chardonnay. If you want smooth and creamy/buttery tones with vanilla/toasty oak but in a dry style with a sense of elegance, this is my favorite California Chardonnay lately under \$20.

MONTOYA 2014 Monterey, California CABERNET SAUVIGNON @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$149.99/case = \$12.50 each, mix/match)

Simply put, this is the BEST California Cabernet under \$15 that I have tasted in quite a long time. In the under \$15 category I do alot fo Chile, and Argentina, and Washington too. But this new vintage of Montoya is the best vintage they've had since the great Napa Valley ones they did in the 2007 - 2010 sorts of vintages. Now via Monterey, and very impressive!

**** NEW ARRIVAL - one shipment only - Old Vines Garnacha (91 points in two magazines) from Spain ****

Bodegas BRECA 2012 "Breca" Old Vines GARNACHA @ \$14.99 per bottle (\$179.88/ case, limited)

Suggested Retail: \$17 - \$20 (see Wine Spectator, etc)

91 points in Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, who notes: ""The 2012 Breca from Calatayud is 100% old-vine Garnacha (from vines planted between 1925 and 1945) made from yields of less than one ton of fruit per acre. Fermented in stainless steel tanks and then transferred to new to 3-year-old French oak casks for 21 months, **this outstanding red is the poor man's Priorat**. Mineral notes of wet slate and gun flint are intermixed with blackcurrant, black cherry and cassis fruit in this dense, full-bodied, pure, lavishly rich, intense Spanish red. It is hard to believe what one can get at this price point if the importer (Jorge Ordonez) and wine producer are committed to high quality." -- AND --

Rated 91 points ST too, who notes: "Bright purple. Deeply pitched dark berry and spicecake aromas are complicated by a floral nuance and a hint of mocha. Sweet and expansive in the mouth, offering fleshy black raspberry and cherry compote flavors enlivened by a jolt of cracked pepper. Closes sweet and very long, with supple tannins and lingering spice and mineral notes." -- AND --

Wine Spectator notes: "Cola and balsamic notes frame a core of ripe plum and boysenberry in this plush red. Dense, with a firm backbone that yields to black olive and smoke notes on the finish. Assertive. Drink now through 2020."

**** Fresh Shipment of a perennial favorite, perfect for parties and weddings and more, VINHO VERDE ****

Freshness counts! My **new shipment of GAZELA was bottled on April 11th of 2016** - less than two months ago!

The wines of Vinho Verde, especially the bargain-priced, spritzy and refreshing, quaffable versions, tend to be **non-vintage wines, kept in tank at the winery, and bottled just prior to shipment**. The freshness of each individual bottle is guaranteed by a origin-guarantee seal on the back label of every bottle. Of course, once shipped over we are at the mercy of the shipments and trucking, importer and wholesaler warehousing, and stock rotation. So **every spring/summer here at BrightWines we look forward to receiving the freshest shipments possible of Vinho Verde**. They are their loveliest and liveliest when they are fresh! Wondering how fresh your bottles are? My new shipment of GAZELA was bottled on April 11th of 2016 - less than two months ago!

How many other retailers do you know who care so much - and - how do I know that, anyway? There is a nifty function on the Vinho Verde website that tells you using the serial number on the Selo de Garantia Vinho Verde.

http://www.vinhoverde.pt:8081/en/vinhoverde/garrafa/garrafa_en.asp

GAZELA (new label, 2016 bottling) VINHO VERDE @ \$5.99 per bottle (\$5.47 each, mix/match = \$65.65 per case)
same screwcapped freshness with some fizz and impressive depth for the price, new fresh bottling!

AZUL Portugal 2014 Vinho Branco (white) Vinho Verde @ \$7.99 per bottle (sale price)

Fans take note! This is the only shipment of the whole season of this "not fizzy" Vinho Verde D.O. region white wine (Vinho branco). Vintage dated, bottled in May of 2015. As it was last year, it is a fantastic value with **exuberant melon and mineral tones with plenty of citrusy zing** too. These are the winemakers I visited Portugal with in 2013 and this is my second shipment of this fun, fresh, vivacious "real white wine" from the Vinho Verde region closer to the coast from the Douro. Only 30 sixpack cases available. \$7.99 per bottle.

That's all for today folks! --Dave

The Right Wines are BrightWines!

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