

# NorCal Wine

ARTICLES, WINE REVIEWS & EVENTS BY FRED SWAN

## 24 Sonoma County Zinfandel Well Worth Trying

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Zinfandel Advocates and Producers (ZAP) held their annual Sonoma County tasting on Sunday, August 12 at Cline Cellars. 55 different producers were represented, most of them pouring multiple wines. Only Zinfandel and Zinfandel blends were allowed.

This ZAP event is primarily a consumer event, but I and a handful of other writers attended as well. The tasting took place in a large tent behind the Cline tasting room. Along with the wine, attendees enjoyed live music and food from [The Girl and The Fig](#). The tasting was well-attended, but not over-crowded. If you're a Zin fan and live in or near Sonoma County, check out next year's event.

I don't write formal reviews based on walk-around tastings. And, with this event being outside, it wasn't the right forum for doing serious, critical tasting. However, I was able to get a good sense of the style and quality of the wines I did taste. I tried about 48 of the 150+ wines on offer.

Overall, the wines were quite good, almost all would probably earn between 88 and 94 points were I to taste them formally. (All of the wines I list below fall into the higher end of that spectrum.) There were a range of styles, from lean and juicy to rich and mouth-coating. Though alcohol can run quite high with Zinfandel, most of the wines were well-balanced. Even the high-octane wines had enough fruit to prevent the elevated alcohol from sticking out. Likewise, some of the wines showed a lot of oak-derived flavors, but not so much as to overwhelm the fruit.

Here are some of the wines I tasted which I highly recommend. This isn't an exhaustive list by any means, but there's plenty here to keep you in superb Zinfandel for a while.

### **Wattle Creek Zinfandel, Rockpile 2016 \$40**

Wattle Creek is one of the wineries in the Boisset collection. This was the first of their wines I've tasted in many years. The winemaker now is Katie Carter, who is also the assistant winemaker at DeLoach. This Zinfandel is very tasty in a full-bodied and somewhat sweet, easy drinking style.