

Robert Parker's



As Seen in Issue 165 - June 2006

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“One of the strongest portfolios from Renwood over recent years, these are all big Zinfandels, but are neither hot nor clumsy. The least expensive offering is the **2004 Zinfandel Sierra Foothills**, a seductive, straightforward Zin revealing plenty of pleasant cherry and strawberry characteristics in a pure medium-bodied mainstream style. Enjoy it over the next 1-2 years. A blend of 83% Zinfandel, 12% Syrah, and 5% Mourvèdre, there are 25,000 cases of this cuvée, which can probably be found at discounters for under \$12. Deeper, rich, and more attractive as well as a fine value, the **2004 Zinfandel Old Vine** (92% Zinfandel and the rest Merlot, Alicante, and Syrah) offers plenty of jammy berry fruit interwoven with notions of licorice, herbs, smoke, and truffles. This sexy, dark ruby/plum-colored effort is meant to be consumed over the next 1-2 years. Ratcheting up the quality, the **2004 Zinfandel Sea of Grapes** possesses a dark ruby/purple color, an aromatic profile of raspberries, cherries, and spice box, dense fruit, medium to full body, plenty of power and potency, but no hotness or astringency. Drink it over the next 2-3 years. The big, medium to full-bodied, attractive **2004 Zinfandel Sleeper-Crain** reveals tangy acidity as well as sweet, earthy, herb, berry, cherry, and blueberry fruit.

The most expensive cuvée, the **2004 Zinfandel Grandpère**, is an outstanding effort. There

are 3,000 cases of this blend of 86% Zinfandel, 7% Alicante, 5% Barbera, and 2% Syrah. Offering oodles of strawberry and black cherry fruit intermixed with smoked herbs, new saddle leather, spice box, and pepper, excellent texture, outstanding purity and richness, and a long, savory, full-throttle mouthfeel, it will provide sumptuous drinking over the next 4-5 years.

Three other Zinfandels of note include the **2004 Zinfandel Fiddletown**. With 15% alcohol, it reveals a seductive, soft style, loads of sweet kirsch and raspberry characteristics, a dark ruby/purple color, medium to full body, terrific fruit intensity and a spicy pure finish. Consume it over the next 3-4 years. Two of Renwood's most powerful wines include the 2004 Zinfandel Jack Rabbit Flat and 2004 Zinfandel Grandmère, both with 16% alcohol. The flamboyant, fragrant **2004 Grandmère** (2,000 cases produced) boasts plenty of berry fruit, pepper, spice, and earth as well as loads of glycerin, a voluptuous texture, and a heady, pure, rich finish. It will drink well for 3-4 years. Lastly, the **2004 Zinfandel Jack Rabbit Flat** offers copious quantities of raspberry and black cherry fruit intermixed with tar, herbs, and incense. Full-bodied, rich, and sweet (because of glycerin) with a monolithic finish, it did not seem as impressive as some of the other cuvees. Perhaps I caught it on a bad day.”