



### ZaZin 2014 – winemaker notes

The Central Valley of California, as the saying goes, sucks. The summer's heat rises in the afternoon and creates a vacuum, which is filled by the cool air sucked in along the Sacramento River system from the Pacific Ocean. Lodi lies at the headwaters and thus receives the full moderating effect of the cooling. Thus while the rest of the Central Valley bakes uniformly in the summer heat, Lodi grapes ripen in temperatures that are similar to those in central Napa. This is why vintages actually matter in Lodi.

One of the finest in recent memory was 2014: even temperatures and no heat spikes yielded wines of balance and real finesse. At least for this one vintage the regional trend towards ever more alcoholic monster zinfandels was curtailed.

Zinfandel often errs on the side of excess fruitiness and over-the-top bright raspberry flavors. Many folks seem to like this quality, particularly when it is bolstered by residual sugar from late-picked fruit. That is not our style. We have found that harvesting zinfandel at a reasonable sugar level (under 24.5 brix) avoids the raisiny fruit that can result in jammy flavors. Petite sirah, which is rather neutral on its own, is an ideal blender: its peppery and dark plummy fruit adds complexity while taming zinfandel's natural exuberance. The 2014 ZaZin is 80% ancient vine zinfandel and 20% petite sirah (at a modest 50 years of age!).

Pictured above is Kenny Schmierer, a third generation Lodi grower. He was a true character, full of bluster and tricks, but for 20 plus years he grew us some of the finest zinfandel in Lodi, despite himself. He died last year. This vintage is dedicated to him.