



Cookouts, Zinfandel, and America's Independence

By Michelle Williams

Today is July 4th, the date the Continental Congress ratified the Declaration of Independence, thus birthing a nation. On this national holiday millions of Americans will be participating in community parades, hanging out at the lake, beach, or pool, watching fireworks, and barbequeing. Statistics show 80% of Americans will attend cookouts, spending upwards of 2 billion on these cookouts, consuming 150,000,000 hot dogs, 190 million pounds of red meat and pork, and 700 million chickens. Thankfully we have a wine that is as American as baseball to help wash down all that food, Zinfandel from Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma.



Zinfandel is produced all over California, so why Dry Creek Valley. Many believe DCV is the undisputed Zinfandel capital of the US. Dry Creek Valley AVA was established in 1983. It is 16 miles long, running approximately from Healdsburg to Lake Sonoma, and 2 miles wide. It contains about 78,000 total acres of which 9,000 are vineyards, 2,400 are Zinfandel. Although over 30 different grape varieties are grown in DCV, Zinfandel is king. George Bloch planted the first vineyards in Dry Creek Valley in the 1870's, the vines he planted were Zinfandel. DCV is ideally situated to produce high quality Zins. Half of DCV is largely protected from the maritime breezes that cool the Russian River Valley resulting in an extended growing season that can last into November. Furthermore, DCV experiences a diurnal shift that allows the grapes to mature slowly, maintaining their acidity and balance. An annual rainfall of 40 inches, with roughly six inches during growing season further provide a Zin loving environment. Dry Creek Valley is ideal for perfectly ripening Zinfandel, resulting in a classic expression that is robust, bold, fruity, peppery, floral, with notes of cinnamon. Dry Creek Valley is the answer to summer BBQ and the perfect wine to enjoy while celebrating America's Independence. Here are three DCV Zins for your summer cookouts:



Not all Zinfandel's have to be big, bold reds. Zinfandel makes a wonderful rosé as well. This year the Pedroncelli family is celebrating their 90th anniversary of making wine in DCV. For four generations they have been making high quality wines at affordable prices. Pedroncelli believes DCV is the greatest spot in the world to grow grapes.



2016 Pedroncelli Dry Rosé of Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley (\$15): medium fuchsia in the glass; medium aromas of candied violets, strawberries, watermelon, raspberry cream, and a hint of orange marmalade; dry wine with medium+ acidity that is refreshing and crisp on the palate. This rosé will kick off your cookout, or pair perfectly with grilled watermelon, peaches, hot dogs, baby back ribs, corn salad and Quick and Delicious Pollo con Mole. [Click here to purchase this wine.](#)

Mounts Family Winery has been focused on growing premium wine grapes in DCV for over 60 years. Today, the third generation is making hand-crafted, limited edition, estate grown wines with a philosophy of excellence and quality through sacrifice.



2014 Mounts Family Winery Estate Grown Old Vine Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley USA (\$36): Deep ruby; medium+ aromas of cooked blackberries, cherries, and plums, sweet baking spice, candied violets, ground espresso, dark chocolate, fresh tobacco, black pepper, and vanilla; silky mouth-feel with pronounced youthful tannins balanced with pronounced acidity, slightly dry dusty earth finish; full body, crowd pleaser. Light the grill because this Zin is craving a juicy hamburger, brats, steak, BBQ chicken, and Asian-spiced Spare Ribs; [click here to purchase this wine.](#)

There is a trend in DCV, families move there and generations later they remain. Such is the case with Pedroncelli, Mounts, and now Mauritson Wines. The Mauritson family have been growing grapes in DCV since 1868. Until the 1990's the family's focus was on growing the highest quality grapes to sell to winemakers. In 1998, the inaugural Mauritson Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel was released at the hands of Clay Mauritson. Today the family has a reputation of outstanding winemaking to match their 150 year old reputation of quality grape growing.



2014 Mauritson Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley USA (\$35): Medium+ ruby; pronounced aromas of cooked blackberries, black raspberries, currants, sweet baking spice, fresh tobacco leaves, black pepper, milk chocolate, damp underbrush; high acidity and tannins that are grippy, coating the palate in a rustic earthiness, full body, robust black pepper finish; another crowd pleaser. Fire up the smoker or Big Green Egg, this Zin is begging for smoked meat; turkey, pork, brisket, ribs, and Mediterranean-style Grilled Steak with Tapenade, this Zin will stand up to them all; [click here to purchase this wine.](#)

Happy birthday America! Cheers to everyone!

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