

In 1979, while I was still a student at UC Davis, I worked the harvest at Montevina as an intern. At that time, Montevina was owned by Cary Gott and Walter Field and the estate included the Massoni Ranch. Dave Massoni was still alive and he would come and sit in a lawn chair, smoke his pipe, and watch us crush grapes. After graduating, I returned to Montevina and for the next six years made Zinfandel from the grapes Dave's family planted at the turn of the century and then again in the 1920s and early 30s. These were the formative years in my career and I remember them fondly.

When the time came for me to launch my own label it was the memories of working with the grapes from the Massoni Ranch that brought me back to Amador. By then the old vineyards had been sold to Jim Fox, and he welcomed my ambitions and happily sold me my first ten tons of fruit in 1995. At the time my plan was to focus on Zinfandel and I decided to call the wine "Z". Since then we have returned each year to these gnarled old vines and they have never failed to provide the depth and intensity for which "Z" has become renown.

The 2011 wine has a deep purple color of substantial depth due to the contribution of 18% Petite Sirah which is also grown on the Massoni Ranch. The hues are bright garnet. The aroma is loaded with black raspberry, dark cherry and plum. Seventeen months in small barrels has contributed a bouquet of cocoa, hazelnut and dark chocolate. The flavors are soft and luscious and feature succulent red currants and raspberry. The rich velvety texture along with mature well integrated tannins is the reason I often refer to the "Z" Zinfandel as my Pinot Noir of Zinfandels. This marriage of fruit, oak and soft round tannins produce a deeply flavored yet eminently enjoyable Zinfandel.

Varietal Composition: 82% Zinfandel 18% Petite Sirah, 14.4% Alc., 7.3 g/L TA, 3.38 pH  
Oak Regime: 44% American Oak 56% French Oak  
Released: May 1, 2013 1,237 Cases Produced Suggested Retail Price: \$24