


Zinfandel

C. G. . 3 . 96

touch of tannin and surprisingly little heat, the wine could grow with time and deserves a year or two of patience.

   \$13.50

 **SOBON ESTATE** 1993 Fiddletown Lubenko. Rich, ripe and loaded with oak, this expressive wine will win no accolades for elegance but is sure to please those looking for bold Zinfandel. High in extract and fit with ample alcohol, it is a near-classic example of the rustic Amador style and should be reserved as an accompaniment to the very heartiest foods.


   \$13.50

SOBON ESTATE 1993 Shenandoah Valley Rocky Top. While its companion bottlings from Lubenko and Cougar Hill are dead-on successes in the Sierra Foothill style, this haphazard effort demonstrates the pitfalls possible in super-ripe grapes. Hot and fumey with a varnish streak showing throughout its length, the wine takes added injury from assaultive tannins and finishing sourness. Loaded with character, but fraught with problems, it is a wine to approach with no small caution.

   \$13.50

SONORA WINERY Old Vine 1993 Sierra Foothills TC Vineyard, Amador County. Its ripeness notwithstanding, this wine is almost completely devoid of vitality and instead smells and tastes of dull, tarry, dried-out fruit which has already seen better days.


   \$14.50

 **STEELE WINES** 1993 Mendocino DuPratt Vineyard. With ripe, fairly concentrated fruit leading the way and rich oak providing a further note of sweetness, the aromas manage enough fruity brightness to succeed. Medium-full to full-bodied in weight and showing glimpses of suppleness in its tannin-coarsened texture, this one tastes much as it smells and may be somewhat too ripe and jammy to go with most foods. We would pair it with spit-roasted meats liberally bathed in barbecue sauce.

   \$16.50


STORYBOOK MOUNTAIN VYDS 1993 Howell Mtn Napa Valley. Bright, slightly narrow and framed by a classy touch of oak, the fresh berry aromas of this medium-bodied offering are a bit more generous than are the flavors that follow. Slightly rounded, yet slightly thin as well, the wine tightens on the palate and picks up an edge of drying astringency at the finish. Clean enough, but always a little low in basic stuffing, it promises modest improvement with age and should be held but a few years at most.

April Release    \$16.50


 **STORYBOOK MOUNTAIN Reserve** 1992 Napa Vly Napa Estate. Slightly more complex than the typical Zinfandel, this liberally oaked bottling begins with lightly spicy,

mildly loamy, blackberry-like aromas and follows with concentrated fruit flavors that are seasoned with smoke and dusty spice. Somewhat frontal in that it tightens markedly on the latter palate, the wine finishes toughly with hard tannins and stiff acidity dissuading any early drinking. Clearly in need of smoothing, but never giving guarantees about the future, it should be cellared with cautious optimism for five or six years.

April Release    \$25.00

 **RODNEY STRONG Old Vines** 1993 Northern Sonoma. A fairly straightforward and easy-to-like example of the grape, this open, smoothly textured Zin teams ripe berries with a fair dose of sweet and creamy oak in both aroma and flavor. Its finish hints at peppery spice, yet fruit drifts away a bit and suggests that the best time for drinking is now.


   \$14.00

 **SUMMIT LAKE VYDS** 1992 Howell Mountain Napa Valley. While showing a bit of the firmness and the tough edges that always seem to characterize wines of the appellation, this rugged Zin also shows a good measure of piquant berryish fruit. Medium-full-bodied with a mouth-filling presence and a rough mix of tannin and alcohol at the finish, it tastes younger than its years and could do with some cellaring.

   \$12.50

TRENTADUE WINERY 1993 Sonoma County. Piney-menthol notes provide immediate distractions in the otherwise berry-like aromas, and, while fruit is almost no factor at all in the wine's thin and tinny flavors, a reiterated bit of pine manages to still come through. Hard and skinny at every turn, this one comes up a little off-key and is not counted among our favorites.

   \$11.50

 **TRUCHARD VINEYARDS** 1994 Carneros. Creamy oak, the scent of cocoa and touches of spice lend a twist of complexity to aromas of raspberry-like fruit here and find like-minded counterparts as adjuncts to medium-deep varietal fruit in the rich flavors as well. Moderately full, fairly supple and shaded to softness in balance, the wine is ripe without excess and carries only a modest note of finishing heat. If less bombastic than many of its riper cousins, this one comes a bit closer to classic styling and should work well with a range of tomato-based pastas and stews.

   \$15.00

VILLA MT EDEN WNRV Cellar Select 1993 California. When first opened, the nose displays a bit of fruit to go with its very ripe, somewhat raisiny and cedary aromas. Airing, however, reveals the fruit to be but a passing fancy, and both the smells and the flavors take on tarry, dried leaf characteristics in need of greater vitality. Flavorful but plodding, this one needs drinking in the near term lest it dry out completely.

   \$9.50