

**From:** Debbie Rios debbie@santiamwine.com  
**Subject:** Zinfandel tasting at Santiam Wine and Bistro Including Turley, Biale, Earthquake, Neal  
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**Happy May Day! My May newsletter is not attached, because I have not finished it, yet! We are tasting the Cheap & Cheerful wines on Saturday, May 3rd from 12-4 And, these wines will all be in Friday. I will finish the newsletter on Friday. What can I say except that we have been very busy! I am not complaining at all!**

**Friday, May 2nd we are tasting Zinfandel**

**Where: Santiam Wine & Bistro**

**Time 4-8 P.M.**

**Cost: Full Pour \$22 Half Pour \$13**

**The Wines:**

**2012 Michael David Earthquake Zinfandel Lodi \$25**

Over the top and shattering to the veins! The original is the Earthquake Zin that comes from an old Lodi vineyard planted around the same time of San Francisco's great Earthquake of 1906. While mulling over a label name in the vineyard, Michael Phillips thought it only seemed fitting to relate this intense wine with the historical quake. With over 15% alcohol and bold tannins, these dark and voluminous wines will definitely leave your senses quivering. Peppery and spicy with plenty of berry fruit (cherries and raspberries) intertwined with dusty, loamy soil, incense, and a Provencal garrigue-like note jump from the glass of this impressive wine.

**2012 Turley Juvenile Zinfandel \$28**

Vibrant and jammed with fruit, offering black cherry and toasty vanilla aromas, with focused raspberry, sage and smoky licorice flavors. Drink now through 2019.

**91 Points Wine Spectator**

**2011 Neal Family Rutherford Dust Vineyard \$24**

This has 4% Petite Syrah added for color and depth, and these two varietals were co-fermented. 40% of it saw 13 months on Hungarian oak. About 1400 cases were produced. It is a lovely medium purple in color with an even lovelier red cherry aroma. I got mostly cherry and strawberry on the palate with great pepper and spice. Tannins are finely laced. The finish was long with some spiciness and soft chewy tannins that gave it a dusty quality.

**2012 Rombauer Zinfandel Napa Valley \$31**

A stunning example of the vintage. Ruby red color coats the glass. Slightly floral with a punch of concentrated plum, dark berry fruit and orange peel. Dense and rich, an unforgettable saturation of voluptuous, jammy flavors fold together. Sweet layers of black fruit build depth on the back palate. Finishing with nuances of vanilla and boysenberry jam that encourage another taste. Enjoy now through 2018.

**2012 Biale Vineyards Black Chicken Zinfandel Napa Valley, CA \$45**

Along with the eggs and produce a teenaged Aldo began discreetly selling his homemade wine to a few wine-loving Napans. Because his rural home phone was a "party line" frequented by nosy eavesdroppers, enterprising Aldo used a code name whereby his customers could order wine

without the risk of revealing his secret Zinfandel operation. Thus “Black Chicken” was born – the nickname for a jug of homemade wine from young Aldo’s barrels hidden in the barn.

Winemaker’s tasting notes: Plump, juicy and firm, this is one irresistible bird-a Zinfandel brimming with fruit, spices, and an Oak Knoll District perfume of concentrated blackberry compote, bright, raspberries, clove, five spice, black tea, toasted brioche, and notes of caramel and vanilla. Voluptuous, gentle, and yummy as it is, this freshly-bottled wonder has the stuffing for the long haul and is just getting started. The 2012 Black chicken-if cellared well-will continue to improve for the next 5-8 years and likely well beyond.

### **2012 Turley Mead Ranch, Napa Valley CA \$50**

Another mountain Zin is the 2012 Zinfandel Mead Ranch from Atlas Peak. One of the stars of the vintage, it exhibits oodles of fruit and richness.

#### **91-94 Points Robert Parker**

Turley Wine Cellars has long been one of the more enviable wine operations in California. Larry Turley should, and does, receive enormous credit for nearly single-handedly preserving many of the heritage old vine Zinfandel sites that exist in northern California. Most of them were threatened with being torn up with what was believed to be more popular varietals such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. This estate produces nearly thirty single vineyard Zinfandels and Petite Syrahs, all from organically farmed vineyards. Natural yeast fermentations have always been the rule, and the percentage of new oak used has dropped from a high of 30% to about half that. Their Zinfandels are never shy, but tasting through the 2012s, it appears they are not as extracted as they once were, but the alcohols remain in the 15% to 16% range because Zinfandel is rarely ripe at lower sugars. It appears that Larry Turley was destined to resuscitate these old vine vineyards as he worked for a quarter of a century as an emergency room doctor. He now works full time shaping wines from nearly three dozen old vine parcels.

Cheers!

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