



AN INTERVIEW WITH WINEMAKER ROB MONDAVI JR.

What motivated you to work with the Zinfandel grape?

Through partnerships with local growers, we gained access to some very exciting old-vine Zinfandel vineyards, which range from 60-80 years old. We were able to ensure control over farming practices and harvest decisions by committing to entire vineyards.

Originally I was attracted to Zinfandel because it was one of the first varietals planted in California, so working with old vines was a critical part of Medusa's conception. But, ultimately, the decision to make Zinfandel wasn't difficult because all the partners in Medusa – my wife Lydia, Patti McKiernan and Geoff Whitman – are Zin lovers who appreciate the cultish, esoteric nature of the varietal. As the winemaker, I also appreciate the variety and intensity of flavors Zinfandel can exhibit, making my job less about creating differentiated wines and more about creating exciting wines.

How do the vineyards' diverse soils and age contribute to the individual flavor profiles?

The Creekside vineyard of Bar 49 Ranch in northeastern Napa showcases Zinfandel's lush, jammy blueberry and dark fruit flavors. In coastal Mendocino, Lovers Lane vineyard offers the coolest climate, which lends more acidity and bright fruit flavors, as well as a long finish. Pig Pen vineyard in Shenandoah Valley, on the other hand, combines the warmest climate with volcanic and clay soils, producing a wine with vibrant red fruit flavors and enticing aromas.

Why did you choose the name 'Medusa' for these wines?

The twisted, crazy-looking old Zinfandel vines in these vineyards reminded us of the snake-haired Greek mythological figure who, although controversial, is a powerful female figure – like two of our founding partners! In Greek, Medusa means “guardian” or “protectress,” so we hope she will continue to watch over our vineyards so we can continue to make delicious wines, and have fun doing it!



MEDUSA



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PIG PEN VINEYARD

Named for the fencing that surrounds the vineyard protecting it from wild boar, this head-pruned vineyard creates wines with rose petal aromas and flavors of sarsaparilla and Rainier cherry.



LOVER'S LANE VINEYARD

Located 17 miles inland from the romantic Pacific coastline near Mendocino, this vineyard boasts a diurnal temperature swing of nearly 50 degrees, producing wines with flavors of dark brambly fruits, roasted coffee and rich chocolate.



CREEKSIDE VINEYARD

This vineyard block from the Bar 49 ranch, located in the mountainous northeast corner of Napa Valley, provides fruit with a deep garnet color, lush textures, aromas of exotic spices, and bold blackberry and blueberry flavors.

Date Planted

1978

Rootstock/clone

Zinfandel root

Vineyard Acres

3.5

Soil Type

Volcanic, Shenandoah clay

Row Direction

North/South

Ranch Owner

Deaver Family since mid 1800's

Appellation

Amador County

Sub-appellation

Shenandoah Valley

9-liter Cases Produced

785

1955

St. George/Mendocino

3.8

Gravelly loam, light clay, alluvial

North/South

Welch Vineyard Management (formerly Robert Mondavi)

Mendocino

Ukiah

320

1973

St. George

5

Loam

North/South

Keith Family

Napa Valley

Chiles Valley

445

MEDUSA'S California Appellations



Mendocino

The Russian River flowing through Mendocino contributes to the AVA's rich alluvial soils. Red grape varieties, such as Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Syrah and Carignan, prosper in the area's Mediterranean climate.

Napa Valley

Recognized as one of the top AVAs in California and the U.S., the diverse Napa Valley contains many unique microclimates tucked into a valley only 40 miles long and five miles wide.

Amador County

Wine grapes arrived in Amador County with immigrants of Mediterranean descent during California's Gold Rush in the late 1840s. Zinfandel thrives in the iron-rich soils of the Sierra Nevada foothills, where a high percentage of old vines produces spicy, intense flavors.