

Food

Great Wine Values: Predator Old Vine Zinfandel Lodi, California

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PREDATOR OLD VINE
 Predator Old Vine Zinfandel.

For most of the 20th century, zinfandel was California's No. 1 grape. The fact that decades-old vineyards are more likely to be planted in this grape than any other helps explain why most American wines labeled "old vines" are zinfandels. Though there is no legal standard for declaring "old vines" on wine labels, it's usually only done when vines are past the point where they would normally be ripped up and replanted, typically around 30 to 35 years old. Grapevines decline in vigor as they age, just as people do, and at that point crop yields start to dip below acceptable levels for value-oriented wines. But just as we get wiser with age, vines adapt better to their environment, developing deeper root systems that help offset the effects of bad weather. They do produce less fruit, but that fruit tends to be more concentrated and flavorful, better suited for fine wines than everyday wines. This wine, made from the fruit of 50-year-old vineyards, is a perfect example. It offers great depth and complexity, with layers of hyperripe fruit flavors, from fresh black cherry to stewed blueberry compote to rum-soaked figs and raisins that flirt with the boundary of dryness, as though someone had added a splash of liqueur-like port wine to your humble daily red.

Predator Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, Calif., \$14.99

(regularly \$18.99, sale price through Oct. 29), PLCB item #4748. Also available at Canal's in Mount Ephraim, \$16.99; Total Wine & More in Cherry Hill, \$16.99.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/food/great-wine-values-predator-old-vine-zinfandel-lo-di-california-20171026.html>