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8 Zinfandels to Hunker Down With

New reviews of rich California reds for \$30 or less



Photo by: Courtesy of Neyers

Neyers, founded in 1992, sources grapes from across the state. [Print this page.](#)

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Tasting Highlights' wine reviews are fresh out of the tasting room, offering a sneak peek of our editors' most recent scores and notes to WineSpectator.com members.

One of the most appealing things about Zinfandel is that buying a bottle or two rarely breaks the bank. Many clock in around \$30 or less, like the picks in today's selection. These Zins come from all over California and are distinct to their *terroirs*, but each carries Zin's hallmark fruit-forward appeal.

A unique wine here comes from Paso Robles–based Ancient Peaks. This winery has the lone vineyard within the Santa Margarita Ranch AVA, a subappellation of Paso, in the southernmost part of the region. Its microclimate is distinct from the rest of Paso, due to its 1,100-foot elevation and proximity to the Pacific Ocean. The peaks of the mountainous area funnel cool air through the appellation, making it much cooler than the rest of Paso Robles. The growing season is longer, allowing for ripe, balanced and interesting flavors.

There's a little something here for lovers of plump and fruity old-vine Zinfandel. Zin specialists Turley tap vines from Paso Robles to Mendocino and nearly everywhere in between for this supple, zesty and polished red. Meanwhile, Cline zeroes in on Lodi's abundance of own-rooted old vines, some dating to the 1880s. Plus, it's widely available and well-priced at just \$11.

EBERLE Zinfandel Paso Robles 2017 Score: 91 | \$30

Well-built and spirited, with lively black cherry, dried sage and cracked pepper flavors that build toward appealingly rustic tannins. Drink now through 2024. 1,603 cases made.—*Tim Fish*

NEYERS Zinfandel California Vista Luna 2017 Score: 91 | \$30

Refined and well-structured, yet showing a briary streak, with appealing black cherry, sweet anise and white pepper flavors. Drink now through 2025. 1,172 cases made.—*T.F.*

TURLEY Zinfandel California Old Vines 2016 Score: 91 | \$25

Offers supple and plump fruit, with zesty yet polished black cherry, licorice and toasty spice flavors that glide along the finish. Drink now through 2024. 9,550 cases made.—*T.F.*

GEHRICKE Zinfandel Russian River Valley 2016 Score: 90 | \$30

Slightly brooding, but that's part of the appeal. Offers deep blueberry, underbrush and licorice flavors that finish with refined tannins. Drink now through 2024. 1,835 cases made.—*T.F.*

ANCIENT PEAKS Zinfandel Santa Margarita Ranch 2016 Score: 89 | \$20

Ultraripe and jammy, yet appealing for the bold blackberry and licorice flavors that finish on a plump, jammy note. Drink now through 2022. 7,660 cases made.—*T.F.*

NAPA CELLARS Zinfandel Napa Valley 2016 Score: 89 | \$26

A lively, zesty Zinfandel, with easygoing cherry and smoky cracked pepper flavors that finish on a snappy note. Drink now through 2023. 9,840 cases made.—*T.F.*

CLINE Zinfandel Lodi Old Vine 2017 Score: 88 | \$11

Plump, with up-front fruit, offering appealing raspberry and licorice flavors. Drink now through 2023. 60,000 cases made.—*T.F.*

JEFF COHN Dealmaker California 2016 Score: 88 | \$20

Zesty, loaded with black pepper notes and user-friendly black cherry and licorice flavors. Zinfandel and Petite Sirah. Drink now through 2023. 987 cases made.—*T.F.*

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