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10 Bold California Reds for the Grill

New reviews of exciting Zinfandels and Syrahs to celebrate the start of summer



Craggy, old vines yield complex Zinfandels at Sonoma's Carlisle winery.

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

Nothing says summer quite like grilling meats over an open flame. Keep your next outdoor meal going with a little prep work and these bold, fruity reds, starting at \$19.

Try spicing up the meal with a fruit-centered Syrah. The grape handily cuts through the richness of beef, lamb and pork, especially when they are rubbed with spices and slow-cooked to cut-with-a-fork tenderness. Novy hits it into the bleachers with its jazzy version from the Santa Lucia Highlands. Farther south, in Santa Barbara County, McPrice Myers offers a gutsy, structured style with Head Honcho.

Zinfandel is a favorite with grilled fare. Its bold fruit and zesty spice notes harmonize with the smoky flavors of meats and vegetables cooked over the fire. Quivira's version would make a lively pairing with everything from chicken to salmon. Rosenblum's effort from the Rockpile Road Vineyard is ripe but balanced, and Carlisle shows how approachable the 2014s are in their youth.

CALCAREOUS Syrah Paso Robles Devil's Canyon 2013 Score: 91 / \$49

Plump and rich, with a focused core of complexity. Floral blackberry aromas open to graceful flavors of blueberry, orange zest and smoky pepper. Drink now through 2028. 790 cases made.—*T.F.*

NOVY Syrah Santa Lucia Highlands 2014 Score: 91 / \$19

Jazzy and bright, with jammy blackberry and smoky meat aromas leading to layered flavors of plum, black olive and licorice. Drink now through 2028. 394 cases made.—*T.F.*

BROWN ESTATE Zinfandel Napa Valley Chiles Valley 2013 Score: 90 / \$50

Dark and briary, with black cherry and cracked pepper aromas leading to ripe, yet focused and zesty, flavors of smoky plum and licorice. Drink now through 2026. 700 cases made.—*T.F.*

CARLISLE Zinfandel Sonoma County 2014 Score: 90 / \$25

Bold aromas of plump cherry, spice and clove lead to zesty, jammy flavors of berry pie, spiced cinnamon and anise. Drink now through 2025. 448 cases made.—*T.F.*

MCPRIE MYERS Syrah Santa Barbara County Head Honcho 2013 Score: 90 / \$35

Gutsy but well-structured, with smoky black plum and anise aromas and zesty flavors of crushed stone, dried cherry and pepper beef. Drink now through 2028. 543 cases made.—*T.F.*

QUIVIRA Zinfandel Dry Creek Valley 2013 Score: 90 / \$24

Bold raspberry and toasty spice aromas combines with lively, jammy flavors of black cherry, smoky anise and dried sage. Drink now through 2027. 5,904 cases made.—*T.F.*

ROSENBLUM Zinfandel Rockpile Rockpile Road Vineyard 2013 Score: 90 / \$50

Plump and zesty, with aromas of crushed stone and raspberry leading to ripe but balanced flavors of black cherry, anise and white pepper. Drink now through 2026. 5,000 cases made.—*T.F.*

ZINKE Syrah Central Coast 2013 Score: 90 / \$25

Plush and jammy, with moderate complexity and rich yet easygoing flavors of raspberry, cracked pepper and smoky anise. Drink now through 2024. 100 cases made.—*T.F.*

LAFOND Syrah Sta. Rita Hills SRH 2013 Score: 89 / \$20

Zesty and appealing, with focused yet easygoing blueberry, grilled herb and lead pencil flavors. Drink now through 2027. 1,227 cases made.—*T.F.*

SEAN MINOR Zinfandel California H. Mynors Old Vine Cuvée 2013 Score: 88 / \$22

A zesty, crisp Zinfandel, with smoky cherry and cracked pepper flavors. Drink now through 2025. 2,720 cases made.—*T.F.*

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