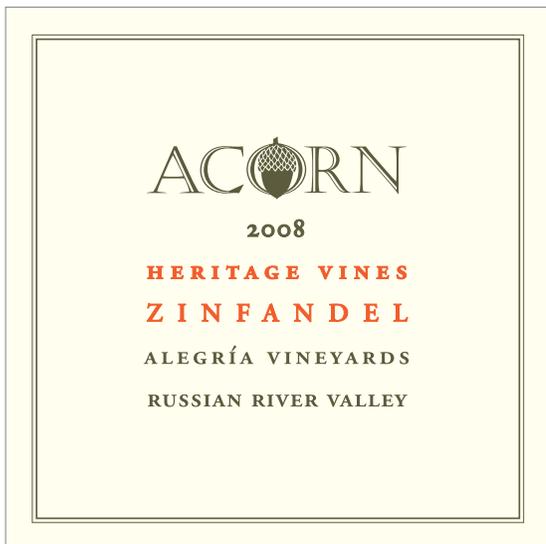


Wine DEVIANT

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Acorn & Heritage Vines Deviance



Located in the Russian River Valley, Acorn Winery is a winery worth visiting. I first learned of them at the recent 2012 ZAP Grand Tasting held in San Francisco. This winery was listed as part of the Zin Blends track in my tasting booklet for the event, and it was when I stopped by their table that I learned of their Heritage Vines Zinfandel. This wine is a serious field blend of [20 varietals](#), the first thing that clued me into this winery being on a “deviant” track. In the industry, not many wineries boast of their field blends. It’s not where the consumer and industry drive has been. We’ve been focused for far too long on single varietal, single vineyard, single block focus. Which is fine, because it allows you to narrow in on what the heck it is that you’re tasting or smelling. But we’ve lost our way in appreciating the field blend, which is no easy feat to manage in the vineyard, let alone market to consumers these days.

Acorn celebrates this [field blend](#), and even provides a really neat [online map](#) to show you just what’s going on in their vineyards. Did you go take a look at it? You should – takes 5 seconds. I’ll wait.

Okay, did you see the other really neat fact about them and many of their field blend blocks? [1890!!](#) Those vines are from 1890!! INSANITY!! Needless to say, they scored another deviant point in my book. You just don’t see vines this old, making wine this lovely, much anymore. They are truly far and few between. And me being somewhat of a sucker for old trees and old vines...well, let’s just say I’m planning a trip in the near future where I can go hug a couple of those old vines and thank them in person for a job well done for OVER 100 YEARS! Call me over-the-top, call me a little weird, call me sentimental – but color me happy for lovely, old vines.

The short:

- A. Yes, there is an aroma not typically found in this varietal, and for me, that was pine tar. Now, stick with me. I’m not saying I felt like I was drinking pine tar. Instead, it was this lovely, light hint of it in the smell (nose) that I just found invigorating. I took a look around, and no one was around me, and I didn’t smell pine tar in the air (as if someone had perfume on – a BIG no-

no at tasting events)...it was just part of the make-up of the wine. Truly delightful and quite possibly part of the *terrior* (or wine DNA).

- B. Their label overall is fairly standard for the industry, but I like the little acorn graphic dropped in the “O” of their name. Way to utilize your own “critter”.
- C. They do have a tasting room which I need to visit to see if they score another deviant point. Should you decide to go, be sure to make an appointment.
- D. We’re talking about a very common varietal (Zinfandel), but we’re looking at a not-so-commonly-marketed style – field blend. Kudos to sticking to their guns and their customers’ preferences.

The judgement:

2010 Heritage Vines Zinfandel: 3+ out of 5. It was lovely, but young, and needs more time to relax. I look forward to trying it again in a couple more years, and felt fortunate to have the opportunity to try this barrel sample.

2008 Heritage Vines Zinfandel: 4 out of 5. That pine tar aroma really did it for me, but you can see a couple other notes below that made this wine just lovely in general.

The nerdy notes:

- nose: fresh, light fruit, soft faint pine tar note (more so in the 2010)
- taste: mild tannins (hello, 1890 vines!), nice body, plenty of raspberry and blackberry, and a lovely, long finish

P.S. A thumbs up for speaking to their [sustainable farming practices](#). My thanks to them for helping to keep one more large plot of land in better shape for many more years of lovely wines, and happy habitat for the animals and organisms that cohabit their vineyards.