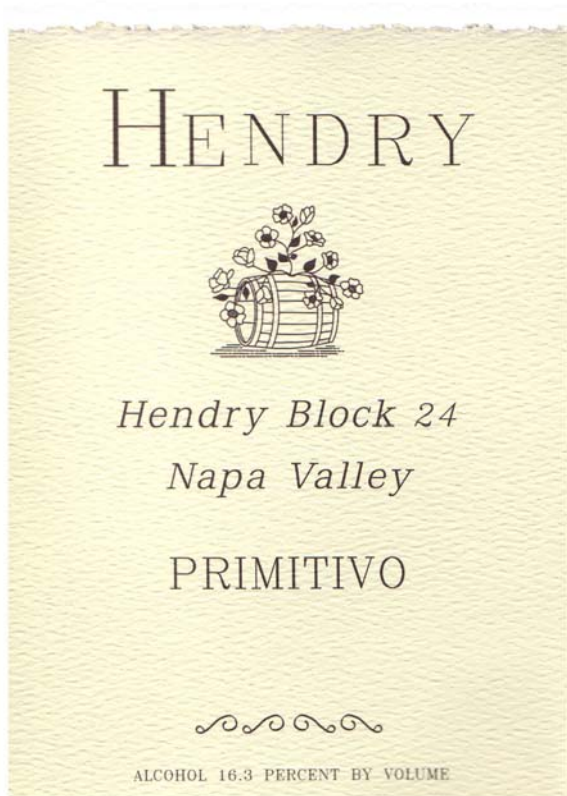


# HENDRY



Named by an 18<sup>th</sup> century priest for its habit of early ripening, Primitivo is genetically identical to Zinfandel. A lower-tannin, higher-fruit-and-acid red wine, Primitivo's typical descriptors of berries, jam, spice and chocolate echo those of Zinfandel.

How did Primitivo get here? A few hundred years ago, in Croatia, there was a grape by the unwieldy name of Crljenak Kastelanski (*Tsrl-y-nak Kahs-tell-ahn-skee*). Cuttings from this grape were carried with travelers from Croatia across Adriatic Sea to Italy's Puglia region.

Meanwhile, other cuttings from Crljenak were making their way north, all the way to Austria, and from there, were brought to the eastern United States. Much scholarly debate has taken place concerning how exactly Zinfandel came to be called Zinfandel, and how it arrived in California.

What we do know for certain is that it made a big splash when it got here. In the 1800s, prior to the pest phylloxera's decimation of the vineyards in California, Zinfandel was the most popular and widely planted grape variety, more popular than all of the other wine grapes combined. Because it was capable of thriving in our hot growing conditions and providing ample crop without loss of flavor, it was a hit. Farmers selected for vines with bigger clusters and bigger grapes within those clusters, in search of higher yields.

Back in Puglia, Italy, the Primitivo/Zinfandel was grown pretty much the way it had been grown in its home country. The lack of selective cloning for higher yields had left it looking, as it eventually turned out, more primitive in form, with smaller, looser clusters. For a long time, it was believed that Primitivo was the predecessor to California's Zinfandel.

It wasn't until more recently, when genetic researchers had the ability to profile the DNA of both specimens, that the true relationship was revealed. A good friend and neighbor of George Hendry's, Dr. Carol Meredith of U.C. Davis, worked with the Croatian scientists to search for the missing ancestor of the vines. At the time the research was undertaken, there were only a handful of gnarled Crljenak vines left in existence.

In the spirit of experimental curiosity, George Hendry planted Primitivo, providing an interesting opportunity to see how two slightly different selections of the same genetic material would respond to the same environment and soils.

Each year at Hendry, Primitivo makes a more fruit-forward wine than its neighbor Zinfandels. Some people like the burly, broad-shouldered, complex and concentrated Block 28, some prefer the aromatic and softer Blocks 7 & 22, and others come back every year for Block 24 Primitivo, the not-so-serious, chocolate-loving, long-lost twin.

If you ask George, he'll recommend that you enjoy Primitivo with dark chocolate, flourless chocolate cake, aged cheese, or a wine-poached pear. Chefs who have created winemaker dinner menus for us have successfully paired it with duck or roast meats sauced with fruit-based or Primitivo-based reduction sauces. With the right foods, or with nothing more than a crackling fire, Primitivo proves to be a popular and palate-friendly wine.