



September 28, 2017

The first time I saw Mancini Ranch was in the late fall of 2012, I recall driving between Sebastopol and Calistoga on Olivet Road when I noticed a peculiar old vineyard. Dried grass was waist high, taller than many of the short bush vines, and the fruit trees scattered amongst the vineyard were full of unpicked apples, pears, and plums left to rot on their unpruned frames. The property was capped by an abandoned farm house, boarded-up, its peeling white paint tagged with bright green graffiti. The ranch on the corner of Piner & Olivet Roads stood out like a sore thumb amongst its upscale Olivet Road neighbors.

When the property unexpectedly came onto the market in July of 2014, I knew it was worth a look. Coincidentally my parents happened to be in town for the week, and we were able to strike a deal with the owner of Mancini Ranch, Harry Pelletti, to buy the property, provided that we allow him to continue living onsite. In 2015 we took control of the vineyard which had previously been leased to a third party, and began chopping back the overgrown black berries, poison oak, removing excess spurs, training-up new trunks, and rejuvenating the soil with compost.

Harry Pelletti lived on the property until his last days. It was a joy to be his landlord for a short while and learn from him about the history of the Mancini Ranch and the surrounding Russian Rivery Valley area. We will never forget what we learned about the Mancini family history, and intend to honor their legacy by continuing to farm the old vines to the best of our ability.

Mancini Ranch is one of the last remaining old-vine vineyards in the Piner-Olivet area, belonging to a small club of historic vineyards such as Papera, Saitone, Maffei, Carlisle (Pelletti), Gambogi, and, Montafi.

We've worked with the vineyard for three vintages now and are finally starting to see the old vines respond positively to our inputs. Perhaps even more rewarding is to enjoy the complex wines of Mancini Ranch, and watch how they evolve with time. With this newsletter, we are excited to be releasing our first wines from Mancini Ranch, which completes our portfolio of estate wines. We are grateful for your support, as without your patronage this amazing endeavor would not be possible.

Cheers,

Max Reichwage

More About Mancini Ranch:

The vineyard was planted by Luca “Bronzo” Mancini in 1922, an Italian emigrant from the town of San Pellegrinetto in the Tuscan province of Lucca. Legend has it that Luca traveled to America in 1919, temporarily leaving behind his wife and two daughters in Italy, in search of a better life in Sonoma County California for his growing family. For several years he lived in the loft of a barn across the street (where Sunce Winery now stands), working as a farmhand, saving money to buy his ranch, and then slowly developing the vineyard. The family was reunited in 1928 when Luca completed construction on the redwood farmhouse.



Luca “Bronzo” and Maria Mancini standing outside of their house

Luca’s son, Frank Mancini, continued the tradition of farming the old vineyard until his passing in 2010. Today, Mancini Ranch is about 15 acres of head trained, dry farmed vines, planted in the old style spacing of 8’ by 8’. The vineyard was planted as a field blend of at least 20 different varieties, on St. George rootstock, the traditional way of planting vineyards 100 years ago. Portions of the vineyard are planted to significant amounts of Carignane and a few different white varieties which we pick separately. Mancini Ranch is consistently one of the last Zinfandel vineyards in Sonoma County to be harvested due to its cool location in the Russian River Valley.



The Varieties of Mancini Ranch:

While most of the vines are Zinfandel, there are a smattering of other varieties mixed throughout the vineyard. The heterogeneity of the vineyard offers challenges, but results in uniquely complex wine.

Many thanks to Professor Andy Walker at UC Davis for teaching me the basics of ampelography, and Mike Officer of Carlisle Winery with his help in identifying many of the more difficult varieties.

Red Varieties:

Zinfandel
Carignane
Valdiguié (*Napa Gamay*)
Abouriou (*Early Burgundy*)
Petite Sirah (*Duriñ*)
Negrette (*Pinot St. George*)
Cabernet Franc
Cinsault
Peloursin
Mission
Trousseau Noir (*Bastardo*)
Mourvedre (*Mataro*)
Blauer Portugeiser
Alicante Bouschet
Grand Noir (*de la Calmette*)

White Varieties:

Muscadelle
Colombard
Palomino (*Golden Chasselas aka "Shasta"*)
Burger (*Monbadon*)
Elbling
Semillon
Plus a couple other vines that we're still scratching our heads about



Fall Release Wines

2016 MANCINI RANCH CARIGNANE

In 2016 we harvested the Carignane-dominated sections of Mancini Ranch separately, about a week before picking the Zinfandel.

The Carignane was co-fermented with Grand Noir, Alicante Bouschet, and Aboriou (Early Burgundy), all 100% whole-cluster, with native yeasts and allowed to age for 11 months in large neutral oak puncheons.

Tasting Note: Stunning purple color, with a nose of ripe cherries, raspberries, white pepper, and creosote. Juicy and lively on the palate, a fruity entry followed by a long savory finish. Whole-cluster-type tannins provide some grit, and should refine with time. I feel that this wine is reminiscent of a Beaujolais meets Northern Rhone, while still maintaining a distinctly Russian River character.

Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. Alc. 13.6% by vol.

\$28/bottle

2015 MANCINI RANCH ZINFANDEL

From the most privileged sections of Mancini Ranch, what Luca Mancini called "Mount Olivet". Roughly 85% Zinfandel, 15% mixed varieties (see list above).

The wine was fermented whole-berry (100% destemmed), then allowed to age for 22 months in large neutral oak puncheons. Malolactic fermentation took an entire year to complete, due to this wine's naturally high acidity.

Tasting Note: Medium ruby garnet, with a nose of black cherry, raspberry, blackcurrant, rose petal, anise, and an abundance of Provencal spice-notes. On the palate, there is a brambly fruit quality that I find characteristic to the Zinfandels of the Piner-Olivet neighborhood, along with notes of pomegranate, plums, and black currant. The wine is full-bodied with fresh acidity and fine-grained tannins. An elegant and distinctive expression of Russian River Valley Zinfandel.

Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. Alc. 14.5% by vol.

\$35/bottle

To order our wine please visit:

<http://www.reichwage.com/order/>

In addition to our new Mancini Ranch wines, we are also offering our Pinot Noir wines from Twin Hills. Try our new mixed 4 pack for a limited time!

All orders over \$250 will automatically receive 10% off.

Note: we are currently unable to ship to MA, ND, NH, & UT