

The Zinfandel Chronicles Power Rankings



As a society we are obsessed with lists. From the Forbes 400 to People Magazine's Most Beautiful People, to college football's BCS standings, everything in our pop culture is ranked against its peers. I've decided to join the fray with the first edition of my *Zinfandel Chronicles Power Rankings*.

This list will consider domestic wineries and rank them based on buzz, "it" factor, excitement and the intrigue they generate among wine collectors and consumers. I'll update the rankings twice a year, indicating which wineries are moving up on the list and which are on the way down.

Without further ado here is the inaugural version of the *Zinfandel Chronicles Power Rankings*.

1. [Screaming Eagle](#) – Hotter than hot. The last of the original cult wines, it's still widely sought by collectors and label chasers.
2. [Sine Qua Non](#) – The mailing list is virtually impenetrable. The wines are exquisite. Even their "second label" Next of Kyn commands a premium on the aftermarket.
3. [Scarecrow](#) – Whether it is the flagship Scarecrow, the second wine M. Etain, or the bottling made exclusively for Premier Napa Valley (Totos Opiate Dream), these wines always are sought after.
4. [Schrader](#) – It started with the only wine to ever receive 100 points from both the Wine Spectator and the Wine Advocate, the 2007 CCS Cabernet, and never looked back.
5. [Saxum](#) – 100 points and Wine of the year for the 2007 James Berry. Hard to create more buzz than that.
6. [Cayuse](#) – Exceptionally well-made, priced right and a flagship label called Bionic Frog. Christophe Baron has it dialed in.
7. [Kosta Browne](#) – Consistently some of the highest Pinot Noir scores from the Wine Spectator year-in and year-out. A Wine Spectator wine of the year with the 2009 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir.
8. [Carlisle](#) – Mike Officer could write a book on how to start a winery. Great wines, great prices, great customer service. Oh... and second-to-none grape sources.
9. [Quilceda Creek](#) – The blueprint at Quilceda Creek: 100 point wines in '02, '03, '05 and '07. End of story.
10. [Rivers-Marie](#) – The winery owned by perhaps the hottest winemaker in all of California, Thomas Rivers-Brown. Once again... great wines and great prices.
11. [Rochioli](#) – Simply some of the best Pinot Noir in the world. Great Chardonnay as well. And they actually have a tasting room open to the public!
12. [Rhys](#) – Old world Pinot Noir that generates more conversation on wine boards than just about any winery. The founder, Kevin Harvey, is very accessible.
13. [Dehlinger](#) – The Cal Ripken of wineries. Been at it for decades and better than ever.
14. [Williams Selyem](#) – Bob Cabral makes single vineyard Pinot Noir like no other. Even Burt Williams fans have grown to appreciate these wines.
15. [Turley](#) – You can make an argument that these are the best Zinfandels in California. Impeccable vineyard sources. A more traditional bottle shape would be good for a 2-3 spot bump.
16. [Dunn](#) – Randy Dunn may yet have the last laugh. He has never wavered in his convictions and his wines are coming back into vogue.
17. [Marcassin](#) – The benchmark for California Chardonnay. Would be rated higher if they made an effort to provide any amount of customer service.
18. [Corison](#) – Old world wines that are back in style and Cathy Corison was an early adaptor advantage with social media.

19. [Bedrock](#) – Almost overnight Morgan Twain-Peterson has consumers clamoring to secure his wines. Familiar recipe here...great wines, fair prices and access to some of California's most treasured vineyards.
20. [Lillian](#) – Maggie Harrison learned the craft from Manfred Krankl. One sip of her Syrahs will leave you yearning for more.

There you have it! The first version of the *Zinfandel Chronicles Power Rankings*. As always, I welcome your feedback.

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