

# Martha Stoumen 'Venturi Vineyard Zinfandel' 2018

**Producer** - Martha Stoumen

**Provenance:** Mendocino, California

**Farming:** Organic

**Grape(s):** 100% old-vine Zinfandel

**Vineyard(s):** Venturi Vineyard

**Fermentation/ Aging:** whole cluster crushed into barrel to ferment. Aged in barrel on gross lees until blending and bottling just after.

**Fining/ Filtration:** none.

**Sulfur:** extremely low as a result of spot sulfiting specific reductive barrels.

**Misc:** Martha always associates Venturi Vineyard with characteristic 'dusty tannins'



## The Producer:

Martha comes to wine from a broader passion for agriculture and the Italian language. Her path led her to a farm in Tuscany where the singular nature of grape vines first took hold. From there she headed to Sicily where she learned under the great Giusto Occhipinti whose humanistic approach to clean viticulture forms the basis from which Martha evolves her own approach: "you're a human being, you know when fruit is ripe!"

Grape growers, winemakers are the rockstars of the farming world and so, Martha believes, there's a deep responsibility to be the vanguard of clean growing. Her project is a vehicle of agricultural justice: be the change you want to see in the world. Today, Martha is still in the early years of her fledgling winery and already folks are fighting for the few bottles they can get their hands on. She sources grapes from parcels she leases and farms herself as well as vineyards with multigenerational farmers working cleanly.

Up until 2017 Martha was doing literally 100% of the work, producing 2,500 cases a year. With 2018's harvest she doubled her production, now working in the shared space at Pax and has hired Tim Lyons as her assistant and fellow Broc alum Lorren Butterwick to help her with sales and marketing.

## The Vineyard

Venturi Vineyard spans 40 acres steeped in the history of Italo-American migration in the tumultuous time between the World Wars. Larry, a mentor to Diego and Shaunt, started growing grapes as a side hustle with his wife shortly after they were married in the 1960's. Their weekend passion grew until they decided to go full-time, buying the

vineyard planted by his grandfather in 1948. The vineyard was formed by alluvial flows leaving fist sized stones and is typified by deep gravelly loam soils with shale, quartz and sandstone. Low pH and good drainage with low organic matter. The vines range in age between 5-17 years and are comprised of an array of different clones resulting in a more dynamic style of Zinfandel than many would expect.

### **The Cellar**

As the bins arrive, some are foot tread and poured into the bottom of the tank to start the ferment. Whole, unbroken clusters are piled on top and the fermentation proceeds with occasional foot treading and short pump-overs to keep the cap healthy. The slow treading releases sugars progressively, keeping fermentation temperatures down and resulting in a degree of simultaneous enzymatic, whole berry fermentation. As the fermentation starts to dwindle the tank is sealed and left for some additional maceration before pressing into neutral barrel for lees aging.

Stoumen's barrel program was influenced by her time working at Broc: she looks for wineries that take the best care of their wood. Mostly sourcing from wineries she's worked with like Chalk Hill whose Chardonnay barrels she's fond of.

Every month she'll taste and top up each barrel. If a particular barrel feels a little funky she may decide to add somewhere between 15-30 ppm sulfur. The only other sulfur addition will be made just before bottling. The decision is mostly based on taste and smell although she does factor pH into the decision. To date, Martha has never fined or filtered any of her wines but she isn't dogmatically opposed, just has never felt the need.

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