

T O U C A N W I N E S

2008 Old Vine Carignane Evangelho Vineyard

2008 in the vineyard

Harvested from the low-yielding 120 year old vines, grown in the Evangelho vineyard in Contra Costa County. This wine was slowly fermented after a period of cold soaking and pressed to a combination of French, Hungarian and American oak barrels for 17 months. The resulting wine is a classic varietal bottling from this outstanding old vine vineyard.

The story of our old vine Carignane starts in the vineyard. These old vines are truly the most gnarly I've ever seen and date back to 1890's. Carignane is now an endangered grape in California, but widely planted in France and Spain. The low yield vines from this Contra Costa vineyard, the climate, deep sandy soils, and the location near the Sacramento River basin, produce a rich and lush flavor profile and delicate nose. In California, Carignane is usually used by wineries as a blending grape, adding value to Zinfandel or used in a field blend of several varietals.

About 12 years ago I met the grower, who now manages the farming of the namesake vineyard, but has worked these vines with his family in years past and knows every corner of this old vineyard. In 2006 we agreed that Toucan Wines would produce a bottling of this fine fruit and the result was thrilling. We again found time in 2008 and so this story begins... 12:30 am Friday morning the 5th of September -- the start the 24 hour Carignane road trip. Two guys, one truck a trailer and several bins to be filled of old vine Carignane.

Very little sleep, XM radio and hundreds of miles to drive - it's the middle of night towing a flat bed and driving in Photo Bob's Luxury Truck (aka Lux Truck). We arrive in Oakley at 5:30 in the morning and weigh in at the local scale and grab a quick bite and coffee at the only place open - McDonald's.

Picking starts on time but our picking slot is delayed, so I use the time to clean bins while Bob snaps a few shots of the old vines. The fruit finally comes out of the field and it looks great. Once loaded and the bins are tied down - were maybe an hour and a half behind my schedule. Back on the road and after a few miles we do a driver switch. Now I'm behind the wheel of the Lux Truck pulling the fruit to make the next Toucan Wines Carignane. Looking back I notice what seemed to be grapes flying off the trailer. Turns out I was seeing what was left of a trailer tire flying around. I pull over. Fortunately the other tires held the weight on this loaded 9000 lb trailer, and now facing another delay at getting these grapes safely in the winery.

On the side of the road in Gilroy, 100 degrees outside, the smell of garlic and fish emulsion, and after a run-around from a local towing service we hook-up with Bruce's Tire who gets to us in 10 minutes, replaced the tire, checked the pressure all around - and puts us back on the road. Our first lucky break of the day. Of course it didn't hurt that Bob had high-speed Internet access and a computer in the Lux-Truck to find the right resource. Photo Bob's back behind the wheel, XM Radio, and we're jamming to get to the nearest dry-ice store before closing. Arriving back at Toucan Wines we unload the bins and noticed one of the other tires on the trailer was starting to separate and had gone flat. That was our second lucky break.

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We crushed the fruit (with the kind help of neighbor Paul and Terrie of course), and cleaned up the mess of leaves, fruit pieces, and bins. Once finished for the night and a beer in my hand I was able to look back at one of the craziest 24 hours in recent memory.

The 2008 old vine Carignane was soaked then fermented in small bins and completed fermentation and ML in barrel. After a full 17 months in barrel, we hand bottled 217 cases unfinned and unfiltered. The resulting wine is a big and beautiful example of plump berry Carignane with an elegant nose and rich on the palate. Sure to improve with age. This wine is big and beautiful with elegant plump berry on the palate and a beautiful long finish. Elegant and drinking great right now, but consider laying down a case of this wine, as I expect it to improve with another year in the bottle.

Gold Medal and Best of Class

Los Angeles International Wine Competition 2011

Harvest: September 5th
Bottled: April 2010
Acid: .72
Alcohol: 15.9%
Release: 217 cases

"Toucan Symphony" by LaurelSherrie.com

Toucan Wines is a husband and wife run micro-winery and 3½ acre vineyard producing hand-crafted estate grown Zinfandel and Petite Sirah wines with a total limited estate production of about 300 cases.

Toucan Wines is located on the beautiful central coast of California, deep in the foothills of the Arroyo Grande Valley AVA. Our small 3½ acre hillside vineyard is planted to "old clone" head-trained Zinfandel and Petite Sirah vines known for low-yields, looser clusters and balanced fruit. Our micro-climate helps produce an elegant yet forward Zinfandel and Petite Sirah with rich varietal flavors and balanced acidity - making our wines the perfect selection for fine food. We produce every wine without adjustment, and each is carefully aged in only the finest new oak, then hand-bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

Husband and wife, Doug Timewell and Terrie Leivers farm the vines and produce the wines, we truly are a family winery - we planted the vineyard, we perform the vineyard work, and we produce and bottle the wines in our winery located next to our family home. Small by any standard, micro-wineries like ours are focused on quality - it's our focus, attention to detail, and limited production that helps set our wines apart.

Doug Timewell and Terrie Leivers

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