2017 Zinfandel Reserve, St. Peter’s Church Vineyard, Alexander Valley
95% Zinfandel • 3% Alicante Bouschet • 2% Petite Sirah • 15.42% Alcohol • Club Viva $60 • Retail $75

Hello Reserve. This Reserve bottling of St. Peter’s Church Zinfandel was created using the best barrels from the 2017 St. Peter’s Church lot and aged for a total of 16 months in tight grain French and American oak. The ancient vines were planted back in the 1880s and continue to thrive under the care and love of the Valdez family.

The result is rich and decadent with notes of black raspberry, black cherry, cinnamon, sarsaparilla, cedar, cherry vanilla milkshake, boysenberry (my dad’s favorite jam btw) and freshly cracked white pepper. This Zin is a delightful throw down, and would be a great wine to serve for a holiday gathering.

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Leg of Lamb with Dried Cherry Sauce

6 ounces basil leaves
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup coarsely ground black pepper
1 6-pound bone-in leg of lamb, tied
1 cup dried sour cherries, about ¼ pound
Boiling water

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup dry red wine
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
1 cup rich beef stock or veal demi-glace
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1. In a food processor, pulse the basil leaves until coarsely chopped. Add the extra virgin olive oil and the black pepper and pulse until a coarse paste forms. Rub the basil paste all over the lamb and set in a roasting pan. Let the roast stand at room temperature for at least 45 minutes to marinate. After 30 minutes, preheat your oven to 400° F.

2. In a small heatproof bowl, cover the dried cherries with boiling water and let it soak until the cherries are plump, about 30 minutes. Drain and set aside.

3. Season the lamb with salt and pepper. Roast the lamb on the bottom shelf of the oven for 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350° F and roast the lamb for 1½ hours longer or until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the leg reads 125° F.

4. Transfer the roasted lamb to a carving board and cover the roast loosely with foil and let it stand for 15 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, spoon off the fat from the roasting pan and set the pan over 2 burners. Add the red wine and balsamic vinegar, and bring to a boil over high heat, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Simmer until the liquid is reduced by half, about 5 minutes, then strain the liquid into a small saucepan. Add the beef stock (or veal demi-glace) and cover over moderately high heat until reduced to ¼ cup, about 15 minutes. Add the reconstituted cherries and the butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

6. Remove the strings from the lamb roast and cut into thin slices. Arrange the meat on a platter and pour the cherry sauce into a bowl and pass at the table.