

## GRGICH HILLS ESTATE



NAPA VALLEY

# THE ROOTS OF ZINFANDEL

GO DEEP AT GRGICH HILLS ESTATE

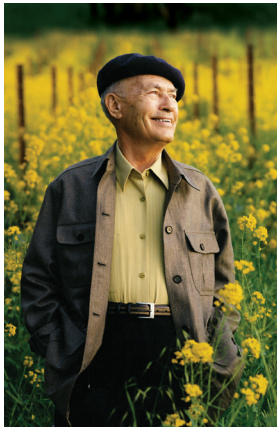
*Our Zinfandels display Mike Grgich's half-century of experience!*

Like an old vine, Miljenko “Mike” Grgich has been crafting Zinfandel for decades. Zinfandel and its genetic cousin, Plavac Mali, are varieties that Mike has called “friends” since he was a young boy growing up in Croatia.

Today, our Zinfandel is grown from a single vineyard on the northern edge of the Napa Valley, affectionately called Miljenko’s Vineyard in honor of Mike and his love for this variety. This wine is sourced from bud-wood taken from vines planted in the 1890’s and re-born on St. George rootstock. The results of this innovation produces high-quality fruit with a small yield, perfect for creating world-class California Zinfandel.



### *Zinfandel's Historical Roots*



- 1822-1829:** Gibbs imports vine cuttings from the Imperial Collection in Vienna.
- 1832:** Boston nursery owner, Samuel Perkins advertises, “Zinfandel for Sale.” This is the earliest and only known documentation of the name “Zinfandel.”
- 1852-1857:** The Gold Rush introduces Zinfandel to California. Osborn & Boggs Nursery brings Zinfandel to Sonoma and Napa Counties.
- 1923:** Miljenko “Mike” Grgich is born and by the age of three is assisting his family in making Plavac Mali.
- 1958:** Miljenko “Mike” Grgich arrives in Napa, CA and notices the similarities between Plavac Mali and California Zinfandel.
- 1967:** Austin Gohen of UC Davis was the first U.S. academic to identify the similarities between Zinfandel and Primitivo.
- 1972:** Mike crafts his first California Zinfandel from the Eron Ranch above Calistoga from vineyards planted in the 1890s. Mike falls in love with the quality and the location of this vineyard!
- 1977:** Grgich Hills offers its first red wine under the new winery label, a 1976 Sonoma Zinfandel.
- 1993:** Mike goes back to Croatia and collects cuttings of clusters, leaves, and canes of Zinfandel and also discovers a book written by Dr. Peter Maleš describing the similarities between Zinfandel, Primitivo, and Plavac Mali.
- 1994:** The 1989 Grgich Hills Napa Valley Zinfandel receives a trophy when it is named “Best Zinfandel, Worldwide” at the International Wine & Spirits Competition in London, England.
- 1997:** Mike Grgich purchases the historic 1890 vines (Eron Ranch - Calistoga).
- 1998:** Mike invites Dr. Carole Meredith of UC Davis to his home to show her the book by Dr. Peter Maleš and discusses with her the possible origins of California Zinfandel and his belief.
- 1998-2000:** Dr. Carole Meredith of UC Davis travels to Croatia and begins collecting samples for DNA testing. She discovered that Zinfandel and Italy’s Primitivo were clones of a Croatian variety called Crljenak Kaštelanski, also known by its more historic name, Tribidrag.

Source: <http://zinfandel.org>, The Wine Institute, and Miljenko “Mike” Grgich