

wineslacker

It's a blog for winelovers. It's a blog for slackers. It's the lazy drinker's reference for cheap, high value wines. You know, the bargain wines you just don't know if you should take a chance on; maybe in the supermarket or drug store. If you want advice on grand cru, well, everyone knows where to get that: get yourself one of those slick, expensive mags. This is a blog, man; prices and spellings are the best we can do, but, don't hold us to 'em. Photos are under copyright.

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thursday, february 08, 2007

Lot 21, Amador County/Lodi Zinfandel 2004

arrived Tuesday. With trembling hands the Wineslacker received the vaunted bottle from the hands of "Chocolatea" Lorri K., Erotic Chocolatier Extraordinaire. Driving home, he shivered with anticipation for the moment of revelation, the unveiling of yet another possible triumph for the California phenom of wine, Cameron Hughes.

Already the 'slacker had trumpeted the virtues of other CH winners; Lot 15, a jammy blend of Napa County Cabs; Lot 16, the sophisticated Stag's Leap district Cab., and the buoyant Lot 17, heavenly hillside California Barbera. And then the lovely Lot 23, Meritage; what a bargain. Available to 'slackers and 'slackettes of all economic strata, thanks to Cameron's right on market target, all under \$20.



We ripped open the capsule and pulled up that cork with abandon. Pouring out the silky juice, we noted the clean, deep garnet color. A couple of quick swirls of the glass and we stuck our curious nose within. A sweet mixed berry bouquet with a plummy nose. So far, so good. Knocking back the largish German glass, we took a bit on the tongue. Yes, there was the fruit, the fine structure as promised, and now this unusual green grocer thing. Bell pepper? "Well", the 'slacker thought, "it's got some wild layered thing happening, kind o' like Ridge Zins, with their herbs and twigs." Interesting.

The next night, after a long, long day at the foundry, the 'slacker headed home. It struck him that perhaps his first taste of Lot 21 was too much in haste. We should have given the thing a few moments in the open air. We gave it a new trial, after a night of being opened and it was a new wine. Open this baby up, leave it by itself for an hour or two; or, decant; whatever, and it rights itself like a well spun top. It lives up to it's promise and, while maybe a tad more conventional than one might be hoping for, it becomes one very honorable Zinfandel; well balanced, structured, very flavorful, with some pleasant minerality and a fine long finish. Maybe just a touch of black tea at the very end. And, once again, one exciting value.

The lovely dinner companion and The Wineslacker entertained with the well regarded Rosenblum low end Vintner's Blend last weekend and it could not hold a candle to this fine bottle, just about the same price. Just take a little time to breath before beginning.

We mention the following, for the sake of complete transparency; Lot 21, unlike the other Cameron Hughes Wines reviewed herein, was provided by the producer.

Get it at Costco, soon, or, directly from the classy website of Cameron Hughes, himself.