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Bill Stokes, left, Charlotte Hallum, general manager and self-proclaimed "wine goddess," center, and Distributor Relations Manager Alan MacIsaac show off their latest creation, 95240 Lodi, an old vine Zinfandel at the Benson-Ferry tasting room on Pine Street. Stokes and his brother, Mike Stokes, own the winery. (Jennifer M. Howell/News-Sentinel)

## ZIP-fandel: Winery set to put Lodi on the postal map

By **Marc Lutz**  
Business Editor  
Updated: Friday, January 25, 2008 6:54 AM PST  
Comments (No comments posted.)

How does a Lodi winery introduce a new vintage and make it stand out in a market that already offers hundreds of different wines?

Get clever, of course. And, Benson-Ferry Vineyards had to do just that with its latest release.

"We had to re-invent Benson-Ferry," Bill Stokes said.

Stokes, along with his brother, Mike Stokes, owns the winery.

"We needed a new label," distributor relations manager Alan MacIsaac added.

As they drove past Lodi's vineyards, they came up with the idea of a postage stamp that simply said, "95240 Lodi." Their latest zin was concocted.

The company paired with Lodi Wine Cellars (a division of Benson-Ferry) in order to market and distribute its newly created 2006 vintage, as well as distribute other Lodi wines.

"What we want to project is the brand of Lodi," MacIsaac said.

Charlotte Hallum, the company's general manager and self-proclaimed "wine goddess," said that 95240 Lodi will be released this weekend at the Zinfandel Advocates and Producers show in San Francisco. The gathering showcases zinfandel wines from 300 wineries.

The wine, says Stokes, has been very well accepted and will soon be available throughout the area at Raley's, restaurants and liquor stores.

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▼ Z.A.P. At A Glance



The upcoming release of the 95240 Lodi "From the Heart of Zination" will be at the Zinfandel Advocates and Producers show in San Francisco. The gathering showcases Zinfandel wines from 300 wineries. (Jennifer M. Howell/News-Sentinel)

**Z.A.P. explained:** Zinfandel Advocates and Producers is a nonprofit organization committed to educate wine producers and the wine consuming public about Zinfandel.

**How to join the organization:** Visit their Web site at <http://www.zinfandel.org> or call (530) 274-4900. **Z.A.P. Festival:** Today through Jan. 26 at City College of San Francisco, 50 Phelan Ave., San Francisco. Tickets range from \$59 to \$125 depending on the day. Tickets can be purchased at <http://www.zinfandel.org>.

Though they are ready to start selling 95240, they are still remodeling their business office and tasting room on Pine Street in Downtown Lodi. They plan to open by May 1.

Stokes insists that Lodi has many great wines at a reasonable price, and their wine isn't meant to compete with other wines.

"This is not a competitive brand, but the brand," Stokes said, explaining that what's good for one Lodi wine is good for all Lodi wines.

To learn more about Benson-Ferry Vineyards, visit their Web site at <http://www.bensonferry.com> or call 365-6622.

Contact *Marc Lutz* at [marcl@lodinews.com](mailto:marcl@lodinews.com).

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