



SILKWOOD

WINES

Review by Rich Mauro
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Resurgence of Petite Sirah Has Made for Notable Wines

Four years ago, I wrote my first review of wines labeled petite sirah. In interviews with several producers, I found a passion and enthusiasm I had previously only seen among zinfandel producers.

Curiously, after a 100-year history in California, the grape was almost abandoned during the 1980s and early 1990s. But, thanks to a handful of dedicated growers and winemakers, it has enjoyed an amazing resurgence since 1995.

Now 345 wineries throughout California are making varietal petite sirah wines. They even have their own advocacy organization, PS I Love You (www.psiloveyou.org), which has 67 members.

Despite its name and origins — a crossing of syrah and peloursin grapes — petite sirah is not a lesser version of syrah. It is a distinct variety that happens to have syrah as one of its parents. Thus, it can display a similar flavor profile — such as smoke, meat, leather, earth, berries, mineral and pepper — with an ability to age well.

But there are differences: It often produces bigger, denser, more rustic wines (thus belying its “petite” moniker).

Petite sirah is the perfect wine for full-flavored foods, including fatty meats, game, strong cheeses, mushroom dishes and stews. It also is a fine companion for barbecue and grilled foods.

One serving note, though: These wines are so full flavored and tannic, I suggest opening the bottle an hour before pouring or even waiting a year before drinking.

In a recent tasting, I sampled 22 wines from 16 producers. As a group, they delivered a lot of wine for the money. My recommendations follow.

2004 Silkwood
Petite Sirah
San Joaquin
County

www.silkwoodwines.com