

the wine report

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91

A Little Purple Mystery

Petite Sirah has done its best to confound

just about everyone who's interested

The Petite Sirah grape has done a grand job mystifying scientists with its origin - and consumers with its spelling. It was at first thought to be a close relative of the Rhone varietal Syrah. Then researchers found it to be related to the almost-extinct French grape Durif. They then figured out Durif was a cross between another varietal, so they were actually sort of right the first time. Could it get any more puzzling?

Actually, yes. Consumers naturally confuse Petite Sirah with Syrah and Shiraz because of the similar spellings. You see, Syrah and Shiraz are the same grape; it's just that in Australia, they call Syrah Shiraz. Since Syrah is distantly related to Petite Sirah, Shiraz is also related to Petite Sirah. But don't ever call it Petite Shiraz.

Did you get all that?

If not, don't be alarmed. Thank heaven, there's a Petite Sirah advocacy organization whimsically named P.S. I Love You (www.psiloveyou.org) to straighten it all out for you. Then take a look at what our tasters found. If you are anything like us, you'll do your best Agatha Christie or Sherlock Holmes impersonation and find out about this little mystery.

2002 Silkwood Wines

Someone must have emptied an inkwell... Aromas were dark too, consisting of chocolate, black currant and smoke with shades of red licorice and black cherry. The color changed a bit in the glass with some mint and eucalyptus notes, but they were balanced by rich red and dark berry fruit...

www.silkwoodwines.com