

Gil Kulers' Wine Picks

By Gil Kulers

Cabernet sauvignon drinkers who may be scaling back their purchases may be a tad disappointed by the sameness of the \$15 and under cabs. Now may be the time to pick up a bottle of something a little different. Not only will they be surprised by the intensity of the petite sirah wines, with their rich fruit qualities and flavors of smoky, dark chocolate, cinnamon and cloves, but they will appreciate the cost.

2006 BOGLE VINEYARDS PETITE SIRAH, CALIFORNIA, \$9

Two thumbs way up

Simple but enjoyable aromas and flavors of smoky, black currant, violets, black cherry and tart blackberry. Full-bodied yet it maintains a round, velvety quality that makes it easy to quaff. Seems to beg for food.

2005 GUENOC PETITE SIRAH, CALIFORNIA, \$10

Two thumbs way up

Perfumelike aromas of violets and blackberry, with a sultry smoky quality. It offers generous amounts of blackberry, ripe raspberry and sour cherry flavors, with a pleasant note of nutmeg and cinnamon.

2005 STAGS' LEAP PETITE SYRAH, NAPA VALLEY, CALIF., \$38

Two thumbs way up

Elegant aromas of cassis, black cherry and slightly smoky oak. Flavors of tart cherry, blackberry and fresh plum give way to cinnamon, nutmeg and anise. It finishes with a touch of coffee and dark chocolate.

Note: Wines are rated on a scale ranging from thumbs down, one thumb mostly up, one thumb up, two thumbs up, two thumbs way up and golden thumb award. These are suggested retail prices as provided by the winery, one of its agents or a local distributor.

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