

DARK AND DELICIOUS PETITE SIRAH TASTING: FEBRUARY 19, ALAMEDA, CA

BY ALDER YARROW

I've referred to it in the past as "the beast." Possessing tannins that need to be tamed through intelligent winemaking, Petite Sirah can truly be a monster of a wine. One of the least-well-known red grape varieties that are commonly grown in California, it does not command legions of rabid followers like those who attended today's ZAP Zinfandel festival, or the loyal drinkers of Cabernet, or even those who swear by Syrah, from which it takes its misleading name. In the right hands, however, Petite Sirah can be a stunning wine -- deep, resonant, and rich.

Petite Sirah has been grown in California for a long time, but apart from some limited success in the 1970s at the hands of Carl Doumani and Stags' Leap Winery, wines made exclusively from this grape variety never really earned the respect or attention of mainstream wine lovers in any significant way.

Yet producers all over the state continue, quietly, to make Petite Sirahs, and many have no trouble selling them at all to an equally quiet, but passionate following of wine lovers.

And occasionally, these producers, not so quietly serve up their wines with roast meats and chocolate for anyone who dares drink on the dark side, if you'll pardon the expression. The next opportunity you have to sample their wares will be Friday, February 19th, when the society of winegrowers and makers known as P.S. I Love You holds its annual tasting at The Rock Wall Wine Company in Alameda.

By then you should be:

- a) sufficiently recovered from the Zap Zinfandel festival
- b) in the mood for something other than Zinfandel

So go check it out. Who knows, perhaps you'll fall in love too. The event web site has a list of the wineries pouring this year as well as a list of the tasty treats that await you in addition to wine.

P.S. I Love You Dark and Delicious Tasting
February 19th, 2010
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
The Rock Wall Wine Company
2301 Monarch Street
Alameda, CA 94501

Tickets are \$60 per person and in the past they have sold out. If available, tickets will be sold at the door for \$70. They should be purchased in advance online.

My usual recommendations for such public tastings apply. Wear dark clothes; arrive well slept and with food in your stomach (or chow down when you first get there); drink lots of water; and SPIT if you want to actually learn anything and enjoy yourself. These are big wines, often high in alcohol.

