

As seen in the Orange County Register, November 4, 2004

PS: Try this one 2000 Guenoc Serpentine Meadow Vineyard Guenoc Valley Reserve Petite Sirah

CHRIS KNAP: cknap@ocregister.com
Register columnist: WINE

While winemakers across California were jamming Merlot and Chardonnay into every conceivable crevice during the 1980s, Lake County's Guenoc Winery was lovingly planting 50 acres of an obscure Rhone varietal known as Petite Sirah.

PS, as it's called by its California champions, is an obscure French varietal that oenologists believe was created by the cross-pollination of Syrah and Peloursin.

This grape has its own little cult, whose feelings can easily be divined from their name: "PS I love you."

Petite Sirah is inky black in color, and possessed of substantial fruit flavor and tannin, but body and acid are not among its strong points.

For that reason I don't usually pour it with a meaty meal like lamb or beef.

But when you're looking for something to pair with a spicy, high acid meal like chicken breasts cooked in an Indian curried spinach sauce, Petite Sirah comes out just about right.

This wine, from Guenoc's prize Serpentine Meadow Vineyard, has dark berry flavors, as of blackberry, blueberry and Persian mulberry, with notable cola, coffee bean, eucalyptus and cocoa flavors.

It stands up to Indian food without the vicious clash that would come from a high-acid wine, such as Cabernet Sauvignon. This is also a good wine to pour with chicken mole or homemade chili, especially if you are one of those who like to add a little dark chocolate to the mix.

Guenoc Serpentine Meadow Petite Sirah is \$35 at www.guenoc.com.
A less intense version, the North Coast Sirah, can be had for \$18.