

OLD VINE SPECIAL: MENDOCINO PETITE SIRAH

Wine & Spirits

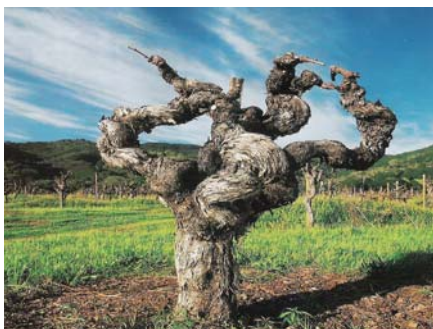
the other sirah

by David Darlington

When it comes to wine, Mendocino County has something of an image problem. I'm not talking about Anderson Valley... I'm referring to the less fashionable-and less temperate-inland corridor straddling US 101. This is old-time wine country, defined by "California heritage varieties"...

petite sirah

"There's a lot of support for petite sirah in Mendocino County," observes Dr. Carole Meredith... "It's a little less mainstream there, so people may pride themselves on it more."



"The petite sirah is incredible," raved Jeff Cohn, who's made several Eaglepoint Ranch designates for Rosenblum Cellars. "It produces really powerful wine, but it's not just big and dark---it's graceful. It has layers and finesse."

"I grow it only at the top of the slope," reports Paul Dolan, a partner of the Mendocino Wine Company, who planted petite sirah a few years ago at his Dark Horse Ranch. "The ones that excel are on the 'bathtub ring,' three or four or five hundred feet above the valley floor. With good airflow and exposure to the sun, it's the most interesting variety of all the reds."

...wineries like Lolonis... craft diverse petites from seasoned vineyards in Redwood Valley, while Parducci has begun bottling a finely structured reserve from its wizened vines near Ukiah.