

CONNOISSEURS' GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA WINE



We are no strangers to bold tannins. Lots of grapes concentrated wines whose brains. And some grapes

Petite Sirah

inky-colored wines with can be induced to produce brawn is bigger than their can actually produce wines

that are brawny on the one hand and tasty on the other. But such wines inevitably raise the question, "How much is too much?" Does it matter that a wine is brutally tannic if it is going to be used with big hunks of chewy, deeply flavored protein? Does it matter whether the wine is going to be drunk by your college graduate, skateboard riding, Twitter-crazy nephew or your blue-haired Aunt Sophie? Does it matter that your friendly editors at Connoisseurs' Guide occasionally throw their hands up at Petite Sirah and wonder why we are tasting these bad boys?

If you come down on the side of Aunt Sophie, then move on to the next article in the Issue because Petite Sirah is not for you. But, if you are still here and paying attention, then maybe, just maybe, you will join us in finding value in Petite Sirah in spite of itself. No grape, not even Cabernet Franc and Grenache in its most frequent California guises, so confounds the common wisdom of balance, centered and focused fruit and what we have come to call "accessible longevity"—by which we mean that age-worthy structures are accompanied by a certain fruity center and openness in order to show what those wines are and to suggest where they are going. Petite Sirah, it must be said, rarely meets that test.

So, why then are we recommending it to you? The answer is simple. For many people, Petite Sirah is the ideal mate to savory roasts and hunks of big game. It is a wine that comes to play when full flavors and a fair bit of brawn are called for. It surprises in those settings because, despite its muscles, it is willing to reveal itself in service with the right foods. And, while we readily admit that some of the most ungracefully tannic bottlings are not for us and seem unlikely to ever come around, there are settings in which the grape does very well. Just be sure to keep it away from your Aunt Sophie - unless she has big tattoos and used to wrestle on the County Fair circuit.

PS I LOVE YOU MEMBERS REVIEWED:

- 88 Artezin Mendocino County 2006
- 88 Artezin Garzini Ranch Mendocino County 2006
- 89 Ballentine Fig Tree Vineyard Napa Valley 2006
- 91 Chase Napa Valley 2005
- 87 EOS Reserve Paso Robles 2005
- 88 Michael~David Petite Petit Lodi 2007
- 88 Miro Dry Creek Valley 2006
- 89 Mounts Dry Creek Valley Sonoma County 2006
- 88 Parducci True Grit Mendocino 2005
- 88 Rosenblum Pickett Road Napa Valley 2006
- 87 Rosenblum Heritage Clones San Francisco Bay
- 88 Trentadue La Storia Alexander Valley 2005





