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WINE: BIG FLAVORFUL PETITE SIRAHS

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Wednesday, July 18, 2007

This column is for people who like to drink big red wines.

The cliché in the wine business says,
“There’s nothing petite about a petite sirah.”

Petite sirah is primarily grown in the
United States, with DNA research linking the
grape to a variety called durif, a cross between
the peloursin and syrah grapes.

Petite sirah wines typically show black fruit,
black pepper and intense tannins.
If your bottle was recently bought,
we suggest you decant it an hour
before consuming.

We asked our wine-tasting group to
compare five petite sirahs.

The results follow.

2004 David Bruce Central Coast petite sirah, \$19.99:
The aroma showed bright cherry, deep strawberry,
candied orange, cola and earthy fruit. We found lots
of alcohol on the palate, but the fruit flavors still came
through. Green fruit and eucalyptus merged with the
strawberry flavors. It ranked first in our tasting.

**2002 Lolonis Orpheus Redwood Valley petite sirah,
\$29.99:** In the nose, we smelled blackberry jam,
tobacco, black tea, cocoa and big-time alcohol.
High alcohol content crossed the tongue but it was
not overwhelming. More alcohol and tannins
appeared on the finish. Voted second in our tast-
ing, it had nicely concentrated flavors.

2003 Mettler Family Vineyards petite sirah, \$22.99:
The bouquet reminded us of cherries jubilee plus
cedar. The wine was lighter in body and more
elegant or feminine than the others, with more cherry
fruit plus cola and teaberry gum flavors. Drink this
as an entry-level petite sirah if you don’t want the
bigger style.

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