

Sirahs in Low Supply

Mike Dunne

The question before the house is whether bright and cheery Syrah is any relation to dark and brooding Petite Sirah.

Well, yes, they are related, reports Carole Meredith of the viticulture and enology department at the University of California, Davis. By using DNA analysis, she has rattled the California wine community by discovering that noble Syrah and black-sheep Petite Sirah are related.

In short, Petite Sirah is a cross of Syrah and Peloursin. Syrah is believed to be the daddy, Peloursin the estranged

mommy, having virtually disappeared from the world's vineyards. In California, Syrah and Petite Sirah generally yield two very different wines. Syrah tends to be lush, round and jammy, often with peppery overtones. It's invariably juicy and accessible, drinkable upon release.

Petite Sirah, on the other hand, tends to be darker and heavier, with ragged tannins effectively sheltering the fruit as if it were gold in Fort Knox. About all they share in common is an occasional specimen likened to white or black pepper. . .

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