

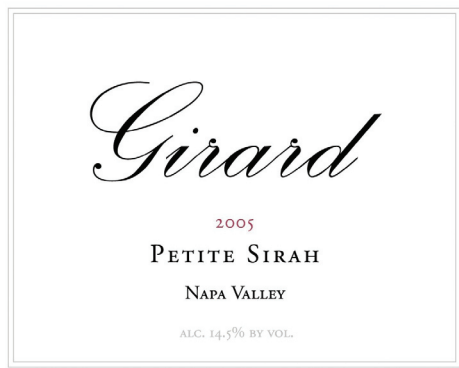


As Seen On...
WashingtonTimes.com
August 29, 2007

WINE OF THE WEEK

By Paul Lucas

Girard, Petite Sirah, Napa Valley, 2005, \$28



Belying its name, petite sirah can be a bruising wine, powerfully tannic and full of teeth-staining extract. Yet when tamed by careful winemaking, it also can be wonderfully seductive, a distinctive red that, while certainly muscular, appeals even more through warmth and charm.

Girard's 2005 does just that. It offers plum and berry fruit flavors, enhanced by spicy notes that resemble nutmeg and allspice. You can almost taste California sunshine in it.

Petite sirah is something of a California specialty. Although the grape originated in France, it rarely is cultivated there anymore. While adventurous growers have experimented with it in Argentina, Australia and other New World outposts, Californians remain the only ones with a real track record of success with it.

That California success typically involves calming the grape's inherent force, refining its vigor and so refocusing its energy, making a wine that tastes refined as well as strong.

Since this still is a powerful red, you'll want to serve it alongside foods that won't be overwhelmed by it. Come cooler weather, try it with meaty stews or slow-cooked braised dishes. This time of year, pair it with spicy barbecue. It will more than hold its own.