



As Seen On...
WCF COURIER.COM (IOWA)
December 4, 2007

PETITE SIRAH MADE FOR THE MAN'S MAN

By Tom Marquardt & Patrick Darr
The Wine Guys

If ever there is a name for wine that is misleading, it's petite sirah. An immense wine that can make your hair stand up as well as stain your teeth, there is nothing petite about this wine. Brawny and tannic, it is as masculine as a young barolo — a man's wine to pit alongside a slab of beef on a cold winter day. While you're outdoors in freezing temperatures. Without a shirt. Oh, yeah, Mabel, tonight's the night.

We blazed through 19 petite sirahs on a recent Saturday with our all-male tasting group and found several to recommend. By the end of the tasting, every one of us had red-gray teeth that took a good brushing to restore to their natural color. Petite sirah has that effect on you.

Known as durif when it was first grown in the Rhone region in the late 19th century, petite sirah is gaining popularity in California — thanks largely to the active promotion of the group “P.S. I Love You.”

Petite sirah berries are small and thick skinned, which gives the wine its high, mouth-coating tannins and acidity. They are noted generally by their deep color and their blackberry and black pepper flavors. Often high in alcohol, they are suited to long-term aging.

In their youth, the wines may be too tannic for most palates. But producers like Bogle and Concannon — the first producer to make petite sirah — have managed to bring the fruit forward.

Here are a couple we liked:

- **Epiphany Rodney's Vineyard Petite Sirah 2004.** The grapes come from a Fess Parker Estate and the winemaker is Fess' son, Eli. It was one of our favorites of the tasting — good substance but good blackberry, raspberry fruit.
- **Concannon Heritage Petite Sirah 2004.** This was one of the best wines of the tasting and not a surprise. Concannon is the granddaddy of petite sirah. This is the most expensive of its four petite sirahs. Extracted dark berry fruit, serious tannins and excellent complexity.