

A Petite Sirah Reviews

By Gerald D. Boyd

Bogle Vineyard, California (United States)

Petite Sirah 2006 (\$11): Bogle is one of the larger wineries in the Sacramento Delta area of Clarksburg, a region known for Chenin Blanc, when Chenin Blanc was known. Bogle, however, considers Petite Sirah to be its 'heritage' varietal, sourcing their fruit from Clarksburg and nearby Lodi. The color is typical Petite Sirah, deep purple-red with a black core. There are scents of smoke and ripe black fruits like plums. The simple flavors offer berry accents and leather, and the wine finishes at 13.5% alcohol. This is a good value, though a bit simple, but should develop more complexity with a few more years in bottle. 88 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

Concannon, Central Coast (California)

Petite Sirah "Limited Release" 2005 (\$15):

In 1964, Concannon Vineyard, in the Livermore Valley, was the first winery in California to release a varietal Petite Sirah from the 1961 vintage. Since then, Concannon has been a leader in the production of Petite Sirah. This Limited Release is a blend of Petite Sirah, Merlot, Petit Verdot and "mixed reds." It was aged for 12 months in a combination of French and American oak barrels. The color is intensely deep ruby with a purple rim. A lovely smoky-earthly nuance over dark fruits marks the nose, and the flavors are rich with chocolate and toasted oak. Finished at 13.5% alcohol, the wine is crisp and clean with no heat. 90 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

Bogle Vineyard, Clarksburg (California)

Petite Sirah Old River Vineyard Reserve

2005 (\$18): Bogle pulls out all the stops with this big, sexy Petite Sirah that offers a lot of present enjoyment or future promise for a good price. Made in the rich, lush style from Bogle's Old River Vineyard, the wine is very deep

in color, offering deeply set blackberry and spicy American oak aromas, lush flavors, bursts of black fruits, firm tannins, and very good balancing acidity. The wine has good length, no heat despite 14.9% alcohol, impressive structure, and will develop nicely over the next five years. 92 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

August Briggs, Lake County (California)

Petite Sirah 2005 (\$35): August Briggs has been making Petite Sirah for six years from the Black Rock Vineyard, in the red hills off the southern shore of Clear Lake. Traditional winemaking methods like open-top fermenters and daily punch downs were used, while the aging was in a combination of new American oak barrels and used French oak barrels. The color is very deep and inky and the nose shows hints of ripe berry and roasted coffee with a touch of sulfur. The medium berry flavors are dominated by big, raw tannins and the wine finishes with a rustic impression and some heat from the 15.3% alcohol. This is a big bruiser of a wine that will appeal to those wine drinkers who want their reds to be larger than life. 85 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

Stags' Leap Winery, Napa Valley (California)

Petite Sirah 2005 (\$38): The Napa Valley is so Cabernet-centric that it is encouraging when wineries such as Stags' Leap hang on to less popular varieties like Petite Sirah. For years, winemaker Robert Brittan worked the 70-year old Petite Sirah vines on the Stags' Leap estate; now his successor, Kevin Morrissey, is continuing the tradition of making a deeply flavored complex blend based squarely on estate Petite Sirah. For this 2005, Morrissey has put his own twist on a traditional southern Rhône blend by adding small amounts of Syrah, Grenache and Viognier to the Petite Sirah. What is striking about this



wine is the luscious, ripe berry and spice nuances in the nose and flavors. Brisk and bright, with very good texture and firm refined tannins, it is a wine of substance and promise. Try it now, if you must, but this juicy Petite needs a few more years in bottle. 91 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

EOS Estate, Paso Robles (California) Petite Sirah Reserve 2005 (\$25): Vintage 2005 in the Paso Robles area produced reds of great color and depth of flavor, including this juicy, slightly jammy Reserve Petite Sirah. The richness of fruit in this wine called for a more extensive aging regimen of 23 months, split between new and used French, Hungarian and American oak. The color is inky red-black, and the nose is bright blackberry, dark chocolate and toasted oak. The richly textured flavors carry good fruit, 14% alcohol, refined tannins, and hints of anise and chocolate. Drink now or cellar until Christmas 2009 (or later), then serve with a roast. 91 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

EOS Estate, Paso Robles (California) Petite Sirah Estate 2005 (\$18): The two things Petite Sirah has in spades are deep, richly hued color and layers of ripe jammy fruit. To allow that fruit-forward character of Petite to shine through, EOS aged this wine in mostly neutral French and Hungarian oak for 18 months. The result is a dense color that light barely penetrates, and forward bright cherry-berry aromas and flavors. It has firm tannins, 13.5% alcohol and lingering hints of blackberry and leather. Give this wine some time. 89 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

Foppiano Vineyards, Russian River Valley (Sonoma County, California) Petite Sirah 2005 (\$25): Bill Regan, Foppiano's winemaker for 30 years, has moved on, but he left behind a string of structured red wines with good balance and seamless flavors, like this 2005 Petite Sirah. Not as inky-black as some other Petites, the color is more a medium-deep ruby. Slightly muted in the nose, there are

clean ripe berry notes mingled with a bit of toasted oak. The full flavors are supported by firm, refined tannins, medium berry and a hint of anise, while the finish, at 14.6% alcohol, carries a little heat. Aged for 12 months in American oak barrels, this is a traditional California red wine, made in an easy-drinking contemporary style. 89 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

Silkwood Wines, San Joaquin County (California) Petite Sirah 2004 (\$39): Silkwood Petite Sirah is a big wine in a big bottle, tipping the scales at 42 ounces--and that's without the wine. Indeed, the flocked red rear label carries this: 'Big, Bold, Black and Beautiful,' as well as, 'This wine may be hazardous to light colored clothing.' Silkwood's vineyards are outside Modesto in California's Central Valley. The color of this Petite is a deep inky black-red (good thing I was wearing my black Led Zeppelin t-shirt) and the aromatics show forward tobacco and ripe berry, leaning to plum and smoky oak. It has a rich, mouth-coating texture, bright berry flavors, and finishes with good length and no heat. Aged in French oak for 26 months, the wine finishes, with some heat, at 13.5% alcohol. 88 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008

Lost Angel, Central Coast (California) Petite Sirah 2006 (\$14): Of all the Petite Sirahs tasted for this report, Lost Angel is the lightest, with medium fruit and a medium-bodied finish. Aged for 12 months in neutral oak, the oak effect is more for texture than seasoning. The wine opens with a medium-deep ruby color, followed by a slightly closed-in nose showing bright berry notes and hints of tar. Chocolate, mixed with berry, is the dominant flavor with a subtle earthy back note. The tangy finish carries 13.5% alcohol. 88 Gerald D. Boyd Jul 15, 2008
(LOST ANGEL is an EOS wine.)

