

10 STYLISH CALIFORNIA REDS

The under-the-radar Petite Sirah grape can make outstanding big wines as well as offer exceptional value

MaryAnn Worobiec

As distinctive as Petite Sirah is for its concentration, inky dark color and sometimes chewy tannins, it's also a wine that can be very stylish, taking on a variety of personalities to suit a range of red wine lovers. This week, a group of 10 Petite Sirahs demonstrates the grape's range, including some very wallet-friendly bottlings.

A descendant of the Syrah and Peloursin grapes, Petite Sirah was introduced to California in the 1880s. The more common style of Petite Sirah is big and brawny, like either of the JC Cellars versions reviewed here. Both of them carry massive weight, but have balance and subtlety and a range of flavors

On the other end of the spectrum, Petite Sirah can also be an extremely fragrant wine, exhibiting fresh cracked pepper and floral notes, or even smoky, sandalwood aromatics ...

Because it naturally has so much personality, Petite Sirah does particularly well as a value wine, and we have ...examples here that all come in under \$15: ... perennial value leader Bogle.

BOGLE Petite Sirah California 2007 Score: 84 | \$11

Direct, fresh and fruity, with blackberry, grape and pepper flavors. Finishes with fleshy tannins and an herbal note. Drink now through 2012. 150,000 cases made. —M.W.

