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Petite Sirah 2005

Massa Ranch

Yountville

Background

There is nothing petite about Petite Sirah. This black grape, grown throughout the warmer regions of California, produces teeth-staining, brawny wines with dark berry and plum fruit, a grind of spice (usually black pepper) and sturdy tannins. Once considered a rustic wine, California Petite Sirah has become softer and more polished in recent years, as winemakers have learned to tame the tannins and astringency with various techniques in the vineyard and cellar. Petite Sirah -- intentionally misspelled "Petite Syrah" by some producers -- is the same as Durif, a workhorse grape of southern France. Petite Sirah is also related to "regular" Syrah; Syrah is Petite's father, Peloursin the mother. Despite their common genes, Petite Sirah and Syrah are very different wines -- the "petite" son has more muscles and hair on his chest than Dad. -- Source: Linda Murphy, San Francisco Chronicle, January 2006

Vinification

Our Petite Sirah grapes are grown on our neighbor's vineyard in Yountville approximately one mile south of the Yountville Hills. Grapes were crushed directly to small open top fermentors and punched down several times a day to maximize flavor and color extraction. The wine was pressed to barrel where it underwent malo-lactic fermentation. The wine was aged in 50% new French and American oak barrels for 20 months. The wine was not fined and was gently filtered before bottling. The resulting wine received nine months of bottle age prior to release.

Vintage Notes

The 2005 growing season began with wet weather, followed by a dry period in March. Rainfall continued well into spring with later than usual bloom and set and we experienced unseasonable rain into June. The cool weather continued into summer with few heat spikes. As September approached we were concerned that the larger than normal crop would not mature as fog prevailed well into the harvest season, keeping daytime temperatures cool. The long cool growing season gave us excellent wines with beautiful structure, great color and high natural acidity.

Tasting Notes

The cool Yountville microclimate yields a wine deep in color with black pepper and herb notes on the nose, with ripe flavors of currants and plums, delivering luscious, jammy fruit flavors on the palate. These rich fruit flavors combine with sweet, toasty oak and firm tannins to make this a rich and complex wine that can develop for years to come. Try this wine with rich meat dishes of lamb, pork or game and their hearty sauces.

Technical Analysis:

Varietal:	Petite sirah, 98% Syrah 2%
Source:	Yountville, Napa Valley
Harvest Sugar	24.2 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.61 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.65 gm/100ml
pH	3.52
Alcohol	13.3%
Aging	20 months in oak, 50% French
Bottle Date	July 2007
Production	124 cases

