

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY

STORE HOURS



A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm*
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm*

Food service begins at
11:30am daily

*No new member tastings
after 6pm

NOVEMBER REFERRALS



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Petite Sirah: Not Petite and Not Syrah

Petite Sirah is an intriguing varietal, beginning with its name. To start with, it's not small or Syrah, as the name would suggest. If anyone ever tells you that Petite Sirah is a toned-down version of a Syrah wine, they are wrong on so many levels. American wineries will often label wines as Petite Syrah, but this is all marketing to catch the attention of potential consumers who will recognize the "Syrah" name. To add even more confusion to the mix, the varietal's real name is not even Petite Sirah...it's "Durif." What? It's confusing, so let's explain.



The varietal is originally from France, named after a botanist, François Durif, who created it by cross-pollinating a varietal named Peloursin with Syrah in the Rhône-Alpes region of southeast France around the year 1860. So while it is related to Syrah, it's not Syrah. And while it's not included as a traditional Rhône varietal in France, it is considered by the U.S. Rhone Ranger group to be one.

The name "petite" refers to the varietal's small berries on the vine, yet the vine itself is regarded as one of the more vigorous vines requiring extensive canopy management. An example of this would be trimming down the vine's leaves to expose the fruit to more sunlight.



When it comes time to make wine from the grapes, the small berries result in a high skin-to-juice ratio, which ends up producing highly tannic wines. (Big red flag warning here: if you or anyone you know are not fans of big, tannic wines —steer clear of Petite Sirah wines!)

As with many varietals, Durif colonized the far reaches of the world after originating in Europe. It's now primarily grown in California, France, Australia, and Israel. Although, based on its growing popularity as a varietal wine and the overall relative hardiness of the vine, it's quickly being planted in places such as Washington, Maryland, Arizona, Chile, Mexico, and

Canada.

Here in our own beautiful state, Durif is planted extensively in Monterey, Lake, Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, and San Joaquin counties. Within our Monterey wineries, Scheid and Pierce Ranch consistently put out some outstanding BIG Petite Sirah wines. Other local wineries will offer specific vintages of Petite Sirah wines, and the varietal is actually present in more red blend wines than you would think.

Not only is it popular to use for big red blends, including for numerous Monterey County wines (ask your server about the varietals in the blend you try on your next visit), but it's also used by winemakers in small quantities to fortify varietal wines from Pinot Noir to Cabernet Sauvignon to Zinfandel during non-ideal growing years. You'll rarely see this in a specific wine's tasting notes, and pretty much never will on the back of a bottle. With these minimum quantities (less than 25%) there is no requirement to list other grapes used in a varietal wine. Just know that even if you don't see Petite Sirah often, it's still there in a lot of Californian wines.



We've referenced "big" a couple of times now associated with this varietal, despite the size of its grapes. The big we're referring to is the wine produced with this varietal, especially varietal wines (75% or more of just Petite Sirah fruit). Some people find these wines very appealing, others not as much. It's because Petite Sirah wines are normally red wines which will knock your socks off...no joke. These are not just red wines for red wine lovers, these are red wines for meaty, juicy, dark, overflowing-body, take entire control of your olfactory senses red wine lovers.

Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

SCHEID - 2013 GSM



Scheid's Triple Layer Red – comprised of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre – is a traditional Rhône blend. For Rhône varietals, which need a long growing season to reach an ideal ripeness-to-acid balance, the environment of Monterey County is ideal. They are sun lovers but if the warm days are not tempered, the result is a lackluster, low-in-flavor wine. To grow top quality Rhône grapes, a very key ingredient is the howling wind, known in France as le mistral. In the Salinas Valley, it is known as 1 pm. Although each component of our GSM is quite delicious and wonderful all on its own, blending the lively trio takes it to a different level of complexity.

Featuring the dark fruit, subtle spice and earthiness of Mourvèdre, the bright, ripe raspberry fruit of Grenache, and the jamminess and lushness of Syrah, this captivating blend is a balance of delightful flavors.

40% Mourvèdre, 34% Grenache, 26% Syrah 303 Cases Produced

14.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

831 - 2014 Viognier



In 2003, Balentine Family Vineyard founders and winemakers, Bob and Daphne Balentine, set out to produce affordable, world-class wines from central California's coastal Monterey AVA, encompassing sites where some of the finest wine grapes ever planted in California originated.

Flavors of apricot and white peaches with floral and citrus notes and a hint of honey. Dry with nice acidity. Pairs nicely with mildly spicy foods (curries, gumbo), fresh summer pasta and roast chicken or turkey.

80% Viognier, 20% Roussanne

14.1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2017

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

831 - 2014 Petite Sirah (Club Red)



The 831 Winery was established in 2012 adding another unique addition to the Balentine Family Vineyards that takes the guesswork out of choosing the very best wines from the diverse Monterey County growing areas all under one umbrella of a unique 831 area code themed label. We hope you enjoy their family of local wines.

Ripe and balanced with deep dark color and a flood of plum, dark cherry, blue berry, pomegranate and aromas of mocha, vanilla and oak spice. Medium tannins and a nice long lingering finish. Barrel aged in 20% new French oak for over 9 months. Excellent pair with hearty red pasta dishes, pizza and spicy Thai.

90% Petite Sirah, 10% Syrah

14.8% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

SCHEID - 2014 Grenache Blanc (Club Blanc)



While Marsanne, Roussanne and Viognier are the best known of the white Rhône varietals and steal most of the attention, Grenache Blanc is a hidden gem that is love at first sip. The white form of the dark skinned Grenache grape, it is an important variety in the south of France, especially the Languedoc and Roussillon areas. But in California, just a bit over 200 acres of it are planted, and they are the proud owners of 1.98 of them, woot woot! Grenache Blanc produces rich wines with tremendous body and a crisp acidity.

Scheid's 2014 vintage has vibrant aromas of citrus, green apple and stone fruit, unfolding into layers of guava and honeysuckle. The palate shows crisp acidity with a distinct note of minerality and a clean finish. It's a terrific accompaniment to sushi, spicy Asian preparations of fish and chicken, shrimp scampi, butternut squash risotto, and lemongrass beef.

96% Grenache Blanc, 4% Marsanne

376 Cases Produced

13.1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2017

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



Petite Sirah is used as a popular blending varietal for specific desired characteristics. Petite Sirah wine produces dark, inky, deep purple wines, normally with high acid, alcohol, and tannin levels. Typical bouquet characteristics include herbal and black pepper overtones, with plumes and blueberries providing the punctuation notes for the aroma. Compared to Syrah, Petite Sirah wines are darker and tend to be fruitier. The brightness of these wines would initially cause one to think that they are meant to be opened young; however, thanks to the high tannin levels, Petite Sirah

wines can easily age gracefully for 10 to 20 years.

Petite Sirah may not be everyone's favorite, even for the typical red wine connoisseur, but the varietal is undoubtedly going to continue to grow in popularity and it will continue to not be petite and not be Syrah. And if you're looking for a bottle to open on a chilly winter eve, look no further than a bottle of Petite Sirah. The boldness of the wine will surely warm you up!

Bryce Ternet - is a contributing editor and is the author of: *"The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula."*

RECIPE

Roasted Hens a L'Orange

Ingredients

2	Cornish game hens (about 1 1/2 pounds each)
1 teaspoon	ground coriander
4 tablespoons	unsalted butter
1 1/2 cups	low-sodium chicken broth
2	thyme sprigs, plus 1 teaspoon chopped leaves
4	wide strips orange zest (removed with a vegetable peeler)
1 cup	fresh orange juice (from about 3 oranges)
1 cup	orzo
1	shallot, chopped
1/2 cup	shredded carrots
2 tablespoons	chopped fresh parsley
	Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper



Directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F; line a baking sheet with foil. Cut the hens in half with kitchen shears, cutting along one side of the breastbone; season with the coriander, 1 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the hens skin-side down; cook until golden, 4 minutes. Flip; cook until slightly golden, 2 more minutes. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet skin-side up. Bake until cooked through, 25 minutes.

Meanwhile, add the broth, thyme sprigs and orange zest and juice to the skillet. Bring to a boil, stirring. Reduce the heat to low; cook until thickened, 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons butter in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the orzo, shallot and chopped thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the orzo is lightly toasted, 5 minutes. Add 2 cups water and 1/2 teaspoon salt; bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low, cover and cook until the orzo is al dente, 12 minutes. Fluff the orzo; stir in the remaining 1 tablespoon butter, the carrots and parsley. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with the hens and the reduced sauce.

VISITING Varietals



VIOGNIER

Pronunciation: Vee-own-yay

Viognier is a full-bodied white wine that originated in southern France. Most loved for its perfumed aromas of peach, tangerine and honeysuckle, Viognier can also be oak-aged to add a rich creamy taste with hints of vanilla. If you love to brood over bolder white wines like Chardonnay, Viognier is definitely something you'll like to swirl.

Viognier is for those who love to stop and smell the flowers. Viognier ranges in taste from lighter flavors of tangerine, mango and honeysuckle to creamier aromas of vanilla with spices of nutmeg and clove. Depending on the producer and how it's made, it will range in intensity from light and spritzy with a touch of bitterness to bold and creamy. If you like Chardonnay you'll like the weight of Viognier and notice it's often a little softer on acidity, a bit lighter and also more perfumed.

On the palate, the wines are typically dry although some producers will make a slightly off-dry style that embellishes Viognier's peachy aromas. Viognier wines are almost always noted for an oily sensation on the middle of the tongue which is a characteristic of wines made with this grape. The drier styles come across less fruity on the palate and deliver subtle bitterness almost like crunching into a fresh rose petal.

The trick to pairing foods with Viognier wine is to fully respect its delicate floral notes and medium acidity. Thus, as a general rule, focus on embellishing and expanding the wine's core flavors while making sure that the foods you pair with it aren't too acidic or bold. A great example might be to match a bolder weight Viognier from Monterey with chicken tangine with apricots and almonds served over a saffron rice. The aromas in the dish should heighten the fruit flavors and creaminess in the wine.

CHEESE

Varietals



ROQUEFORT

Pronunciation: Rock-foor

No list of favorite French cheeses would be complete without the inclusion of A.O.C. Roquefort Cheese. Roquefort is an ancient cheese which dates back about 2,000 years and it well deserves its reputation as one of France's national treasures (Brie is also included in that national treasure list.). We know that Roquefort dates back at least to 79 C.E. because Pliny the Elder wrote about its rich aroma.

Some Roquefort producers still bake rye bread and allow the bread to develop the mold spores naturally in the caves. They then inject the spores into their cheeses. But actually there are hundreds of varieties of Roqueforti Penicillium - and some Roquefort producers grow the mold in a lab and inject the spores into the cheeses.















What makes Roquefort Cheese so special? Well, the mold does - because it determines the texture and the sharp pungency of the fully ripened cheese. And the flavor and texture will vary from one cheesemaker to another. Roquefort is one of the most intensely flavored of all French cheeses. A.O.C. regulations require that Roquefort be produced from the raw milk of Lacau-ne sheep, either right in the vicinity of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon in southern France, or nearby. Each of these sheep produces only 16 gallons of milk in a season - a mere fraction of what a cow would produce!

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	831 2014 Viognier	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	831 2014 Petite Sirah	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Scheid 2014 Scheid Grenache Blanc	\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
NOVEMBER SELECTIONS				
PRICES EXPIRE 1/31/2017				
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	Pierce 2013 Zinfandel	\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
	Craftwork 2014 Chardonnay	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
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