

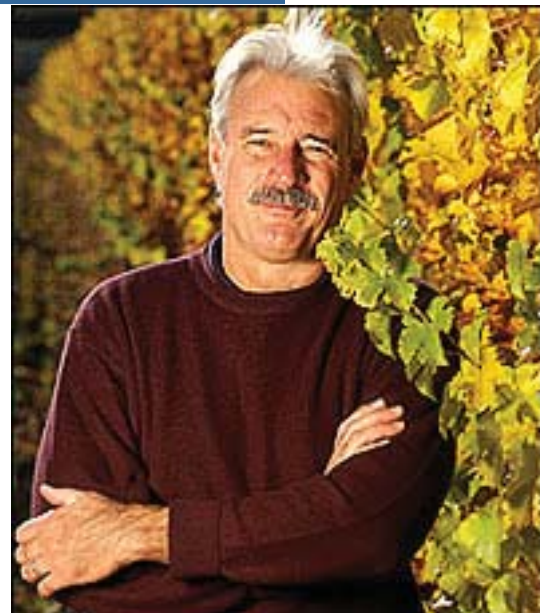
James Laube's Blog Archives

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Finding Double Pleasure out of Napa
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Without a doubt, one of the greatest pleasures of being a wine critic is being able to direct readers to great wines that are also great values.

One of our recent office favorites is a tiny wine company called Olabisi (Nigerian for "joy multiplied"), which is based in Napa Valley.



But the grapes used by owner-winemaker Ted Osborne come from elsewhere, Syrah from Knights Valley and Syrah and **Petite Sirah from Suisun Valley**. And they're awfully good.

Knights Valley, north of Napa, but in Sonoma County, is a well-known source of Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

Suisun, though, is one of those appellations that few people know of and even fewer know where it is. It's one of the oldest appellations in California, and it's near Fairfield, in Solano County, east of Napa Valley. It's more Napa than not, as it is within a few miles of the Napa County line, and for years the grapes have been considered as "Napa" grapes.

They're obviously pretty good, and Osborne, who is also the winemaker for Piña Cellars in Napa, shows a deft hand for crafting wines of subtlety and finesse.

A year ago, the Olabisi wines had some highwater marks: **The 2003 Syrah Suisun Valley King Vineyard (\$22, 225 cases) earned a 91-point rating, and two other wines, the 2003 Petite Sirah Suisun King Vineyard (88, \$35) and 2003 Syrah Knights Valley Betsy's Vineyard (85, \$22), were very good as well.**

I just tried the 2004 versions of these three wines and can only say for now that they're either as good as or better than the '03s, so this is a winery worth checking out. They are ripe, rich wines that are remarkably elegant and graceful.

Prices are \$42 for the Syrah Suisun King Vineyard, \$29 each for the Suisun Petite Sirah and Knights Valley Syrah.

I find it especially satisfying recommending producers like Olabisi.... You get a lot of bang for your buck, you're supporting an upstart and you're discovering great wines can come from places you'd never expect. [Suisun Valley]

So when you're drinking wines with friends you can pull out a bottle of Olabisi and tell them the story about this hot new winery and **this hot little appellation in Solano County off Interstate 80 [Suisun Valley]**, nestled in the rolling foothills behind the Fairfield Costco.

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