



As Seen On...
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Tasting Highlights: California Petite Sirah

Ten exciting wines from an underappreciated grape that, despite its name, can make some very big reds

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Petite Sirah has a lot of personality, with dense (sometimes rustic and chewy) tannins, inky dark color and powerful, potent dark fruit flavors. And with Petite Sirah's strong identity comes a strong following—there's even a fan club (P.S. I Love You) that sponsors a “Blue Tooth Tour” of Petites around the country.

This week's mix of recent Petite Sirah releases includes both old standbys and new favorites. The top three wines—two from perennial top-scorer Rosenblum and one from Trinitas—show the diversity of Petite Sirah, as it can perform well in Napa Valley, Contra Costa or Lodi.

Also here is the first look at winemaker Matthew Rorick's Forlorn Hope label. Rorick gets his grapes from Suisun Valley in Solano County, a region just east of Napa that has been a longtime source of grapes for Napa and Sonoma producers but has recently appeared solo on bottlings. This is also the first time we've seen the Parallel Rows Petite Sirah, from a St. Helena vineyard where the average age of the vines is more than 70 years.

FORLORN HOPE

Petite Sirah Suisun Valley
Les Deux Matieux 2005
Score: 89 | \$47

Rich and juicy, with ripe raspberry, blackberry and huckleberry flavors and a hint of licorice. Spicy, zesty and fruit forward, with plenty of firm tannins that give this a great dimension of structure. Drink now through 2018. 180 cases produced. —M.W.