



WEEKEND WINE FOR MARCH 8, 2004

We caught up with the “**Blue Tooth Tour**” on its first annual nationwide effort to educate trade and media on the lure of **Petite Sirah**. Sponsored by Concannon Vineyard and the P.S. I Love You organization, the tour is intended to get the word out about Petite Sirah’s significance in U.S. viticultural history. Indeed, rather than a generic introduction to Petite Sirah, the vintners we spoke to had a specific agenda — to explain and concur with recent DNA findings that indicate that Petite Sirah is the direct offspring of Syrah and Peloursin, and that (most importantly) it is flourishing in California.

It was a fun opportunity to taste several Petite Sirahs in one setting. And although the tagline of the Blue Tooth Tour is that these are “Wines You Can Sink Your Teeth Into,” — we’re finding that the trend is away from the monstrosly deep, nearly thick wines that first inspired the varietal’s dedicated cult following, and toward more balanced, even elegant wines.

Here are our notes on the wines we tasted:

Concannon Vineyards 2001 Petite Sirah Central Coast Selected Vineyards (\$10). Black cherry fruit is laced with a gamy character — this is not your everyday \$10 wine! Dry, tannic structure. Would be ideal paired with grilled meats and summer barbecue. Ready to drink now.

Concannon Vineyards 2001 Petite Sirah Livermore Valley Reserve Limited Release (\$24). Smoky note on bouquet introduces appealing earthy notes that are balanced with ripe, red fruit. Picks up chocolate notes on lush finish. Ready to drink now and over the next three or four years.

Concannon Vineyards 2000 Petite Sirah Livermore Valley Heritage (\$36). Deep, inky purple color and concentrated spice and black currant bouquet lead to a beautifully structured wine. Features black plum and currant fruit, roasted coffee, chocolate, and spicy oak. Ready to drink now and over the next 5-8 years.

Blue Tooth Tour

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David Bruce 2002 Petite Syrah Central Coast (\$16). Seriously funky bouquet, then intense, focused red fruit and spices. Meaty, chewy tannins make it a bit rough at this young stage, but should smooth out nicely and be a good, complex wine at a value price. Drink from 2005-2010.

Foppiano 2002 Petite Sirah Russian River Valley Bacigalupi Vineyard (\$18). Pretty red berry fruit aromas and flavors are accented with white pepper and toffee notes. Smooth and appealing, even at this young stage. Ready to drink now and over the next three years.

Guenoc 2000 Petite Sirah North Coast (\$19). Lovely, perfumed bouquet leads to sweet red cherry and plum fruit laced with warm spices and toasty oak. A good example of the softer, gentler Petite Sirahs that are becoming the norm these days. Ready to drink now.

Guenoc 1999 Petite Sirah Guenoc Valley Serpentine Meadow Reserve (\$25). Full-bodied but craftily balanced, displaying ripe black cherry, blackberry and chocolate aromas and flavors, with distinctive spice, black pepper and floral accents. Very nice now and over the next three or four years.

Parducci 2000 Petite Sirah California Vinter Select (\$10). Heck of a deal, with ripe and lush blackberry and plum fruit, dark chocolate and spicy oak aromas and flavors. Good structure, generous finish. Ready to drink now and over the next year or two.

Other participants in the Blue Tooth Tour include Bogle Winery, EOS Estate Winery, F. Teldeschi Winery, Michael David Vineyards, Pacific Star Winery, Pedroncelli Winery, Robert Biale Vineyards, Rosenblum Cellars, Silkwood Wines, and Trentadue Winery.

To learn more about the tour and Petite Sirah, visit www.psiloveyou.org.

Cheers!

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