

Syrah New World and Old World

The Winetasters have voted. We herald Syrah as the club favourite red after years of comparative varietal tastings. This is our exploration of your much-loved grape.

A well-known winemaker friend of mine (who shall remain nameless) has said to me on a variety of occasions "it is the place, not the clone that reveals the wine's character". To that end, we are privileged to explore some great Syrah (shiraz) from around the world. Old world winemakers present us with the archetypal Syrah. Brooding black fruit, bolstered by firm tannins, accented with the classic signatures brown spice and white pepper. The new world Syrah seems a bit unpredictable. Some new world winemakers adhere to the European signature, while others express themselves by presenting a rich blueberry pie-like experience, all sweet fruit and vanilla with soft tannins and a luxurious mouthfeel. We often preach each "every consumer's palate is correct there are no wrong answers". Certainly the consumer has spoken in the case of Australian Shiraz. American oak and very ripe, plummy fruit has made Shiraz the darling of the Australian wine industry. The very name Shiraz has become the moniker for this style of wine. Some wineries even produce both Syrah and Shiraz from the same grapes, one in an Australian style and one with a European signature.

The classic Syrah signature is revealed in several great Rhône Valley appellations. The most famous are Côte-Rôtie, Hermitage and Cornas. We are pouring examples from the great 2007 vintage; M. Chapoutier Les Arènes Cornas, Maison Nicolas Perrin Côte-Rôtie and M. Chapoutier Monier De La Sizeranne Hermitage. Of some note is the fact that both of the Chapoutier wines are made with Biodynamic grapes. Though firmly mired in their youth, they will provide lively fruit expression that will contrast nicely with their new world cousins. We will skip over to the southern hills of Montalcino Italy to find the 2004 Syrah Colvecchio from Castello Banfi. Like its French counterparts, this Italian beauty is a single vineyard wine, planted on very calcareous soils like those of the Rhône.

over...

As always with our tastings, this event will be strictly non-smoking, and we request your cooperation in not wearing any scented after-shave or perfume.

Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2012
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Limit: 122 people

North York Memorial Community Hall
5110 Yonge St. (under library)
North York Centre Subway

Cancellations accepted up to January 6, 2012 — David Hutchison (416-690-0281 **evenings**). **No reservations by phone, please.** No confirmations will be issued — you will be contacted only if we are sold out. First come basis. Non-members may attend at guest rates, but preference will be given to members.

You can register online using a credit card at www.winetasters.ca, or send in this form with a cheque.

_____ Tear and Enclose _____

Cheque payable to:
Winetasters Society of Toronto
c/o Dave Hutchison
270 Glen Manor Drive West
Toronto, Ontario
M4E 2Y2

Names: _____

Phone: (____) _____ W (____) _____

Cheque Enclosed for: Syrah New and Old

_____ Members @ 46.00 each _____
_____ Guests @ 55.00 each _____

Yes, I wish to sit at a New Members Table
with an expert to answer my questions.

Total _____

Our new world adventure begins in the northern hemisphere with a 2006 Seven Hills Vineyard, L'Ecole No. 41 Syrah from the Walla Walla Valley appellation in Washington State. Syrah has become a preferred varietal for Washington winemakers whose hot, dry, summers are very Rhône-like. Syrah is currently poised to become the signature grape for Washington, eclipsing Merlot. Further south in Chile, a 2006 Syrah Pangea, and Colchagua Valley, from Viña Ventisquero has a winemaking team of the famous Australian John Duval (winemaker for Penfolds Grange Hermitage) and Chilean Felipe Tosso. Look for a more French-style here than Australian.

As we creep closer to Australia, we encounter the 2006 Millton Clos De Ste. Anne "The Crucible" Syrah in the Gisborne area of New Zealand. John Millton adds a small amount of Viognier to the blend as is common in France. Like Chapoutier, Millton Vineyards are also Biodynamic certified. We end our flight with another John Duval wine, the 2005 Entity Shiraz, Barossa Valley appellation, Australia. Aged in French oak, this wine is vinified in a very traditional Rhône-style.