



A Look at the Many Faces of Syrah, aka Shiraz

Syrah, the grape with origins in France's northern Rhone Valley is particularly fitting for the cold months. While often blended with other Rhone varietals to create beautifully balanced wines, it is also used on its own to wondrous effect. Syrah brims with characteristic notes of tobacco, smoked meat, anise and pepper; and its inky color, full body, tannins and earthiness make it a perfect partner for a crackling fireplace and the long-braised meats of winter.

Not to be confused with Petite Sirah, Syrah is grown mostly in France, Australia and California. The love child of Dureza and Mondeuse Blanche, both from southeastern France, the grape's popularity goes back to the 1700s in the northern Rhone Valley. In the 1800s, it attracted the attention of Australia, where it became known as Shiraz. It then caught on in the US—most notably in California—which produces excellent Syrah.

Through the marriage of fertile soil and a passion for wine, **Maison Paul Jaboulet Aîné** has been making wine since 1834 in the northern Rhone, fusing biodynamic and modern winemaking methods. The **2010 Domaine de Thalabert Crozes Hermitage** is 100 percent Syrah and an



Vineyards at Paul Jaboulet Aîné in the northern Rhone Valley.

excellent opportunity to experience the grape's purity. Aromatic of licorice and black currants, it is intense and full-bodied. **93 RP** \$41.99

From Serignan-du-Comtat, a small village northeast of Orange in Provence, the **2014 Les Cassagnes de la Nerthe Côtes-du-Rhône Villages** is a blend of Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault and Carignan—all classic Rhone varietals. Comprised of 20 percent Syrah, it is a testament to the grape's power and ability to lend structure to a blended wine. Rimmed with red fruits, it is round and fresh tasting with sweet spices and a silken texture. \$16.99

The **2016 Equis 'Equinoxe' Crozes-Hermitage** from the northern Rhone is all Syrah. Made by the esteemed Graillet family, it is an excellent dinner companion to a variety of dishes. Ripe fruit and savory flavors of black olives and smoked

meats give elegant strength to the roundness that comes from de-stemming the grapes. \$16.99

Sarah and Sparky Marquis, the hands, hearts and minds of **Molly Dooker** wines, have somersaulted from their humble, hardworking beginnings to a celebratory story of award-winning wines. Located in McLaren Vale, South Australia, much of their vineyards are devoted to Shiraz. **Molly Dooker's 2016 Two Left Feet** is Shiraz blended with 29% Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. The ripe, dark fruits and baking spices are inviting, but the texture of a Molly Dooker wine is captivating, with its silken mouthfeel and balanced tannins. If you've never experienced these wines, you owe it to yourself to change that. \$24.99

Willow Bridge Estate in West Australia makes consistently delicious wines.

Named for the dragonflies dancing over the dam at Willow Bridge during harvest, the **2014 Dragonfly Shiraz** is blended with five percent Grenache. Aromatic of plums, blueberries and baking spices, it is round with silken tannins. \$12.99

In Santa Barbara's Santa Ynez Valley, **Andrew Murray Vineyards** produces excellent wines. The **2015 Tous les Jours Syrah** is modeled after the finest qualities of northern Rhone Syrah and Australian Shiraz, bringing subtlety and approachability together. With aromas and flavors of black cherry, raspberry and white pepper, framed by toasty oak, this is indeed a food-friendly wine to sip and enjoy. **91 WE** \$12.99

With the cold and snow outside, it's the ideal time to surround yourself, your family and friends with warming dishes, all of which would pair with the many wondrous faces of Syrah. ♦

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Did you know... Syrah is one of the major grapes of Côtes du Rhone, Chateaneuf du Pape and Gigondas; and it is the sole red grape used in the Northern Rhone Valley.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

Days not mentioned will feature New Arrivals.

Fri 1/12 & Sat 1/13: Tried and true wines

Fri 1/19: January Staff Picks

Sat 1/20: French and Italian stunners

Fri 1/26 & Sat 1/27: A weekend of 90s wines

Fri 2/2: Syrah, solo and blended, with a few from the article on page 1

Sat 2/3: Super Bowl wines with Sheila's Kahlua Chili

Braised Pork with Red Wine

Adapted from Mark Bittman at the NYT

2 lbs boneless pork shoulder, cut into large chunks
Salt and pepper
2 cups Côtes du Rhône
1 cup rich chicken stock
1 lb fat carrots, peeled and cut into large chunks
10 cloves garlic, more or less, peeled
2 Tbsp butter
Cooked egg noodles for serving
Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish.



1. Combine pork, salt and pepper to taste, wine, stock, carrots and garlic in a saucepan, Dutch oven or slow cooker. Bring to a boil, then adjust heat so that mixture simmers steadily but not vigorously. (If using a slow cooker, just turn it to "high" and let cook for at least three hours.)
2. Cook, stirring every half-hour or so, until meat is very tender and just about falling apart, at least an hour and most likely a bit longer. Use a slotted spoon to remove solid ingredients to a bowl, then turn heat to high. (If using a slow cooker, transfer liquid to a saucepan for this step.) Reduce to about a cup, or even less. Taste and adjust seasoning, then lower heat and stir in butter.
3. Add solids to sauce and reheat. Plate over egg noodles, garnished with parsley, and serve with Bill's staff pick or your favorite Rhône red.

News & Events

Rest and Recharge for the New Year

The festive and tiring holidays are behind us, and the promising new year is before us. Let's toast that promise with a bevy of wine tastings, including a weekend of **wines from our growing 90s section** later this month.

Be sure to check out **Max's Corner**, our new display of craft spirits...yet one more way to stay warm.

And you know how we feel about the **Super Bowl**, which is on Sunday, February 4th. While some may call it a beer day, we beg to differ. Carrying forth our tradition of **Sheila's Kahlua Chili** and wines that make it a wine lover's event, too, we'll prepare for kickoff with an unbeatable lineup, complete with chili and printed out recipes to take home.

Winter Sour

Adapted from Esquire.com

It's a traditional whiskey sour, but to make it a winter sour, you float red wine — Côtes du Rhône, Syrah or something with backbone to it — on top. The rich aromatics in the wine push it into winter.



4 oz Bourbon
1.5 oz lemon juice
1.55 oz simple syrup
Red wine float

Shake the Bourbon, lemon juice and simple syrup with ice and strain into two double old fashioned glasses filled with fresh ice. Top each with a red wine float and toast to keeping warm and starting anew. Happy New Year.

January 2018 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2016 Chalk Hill Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) With its cool-climate influences, this Chard has remarkable varietal intensity, balanced acidity and mineral notes that complement the rich and full flavors of baked apples, and vanilla cream. *Veal piccata

Max: 2015 Justin Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles) \$22.99 (reg \$26.99) Hand-harvested grapes are aged in small French oak barrels, yielding a dry, mid- to full-bodied Cab with notes of ripe, dark fruit, savory Autumnal flavors, toasty oak and softly textured tannins. *Black Angus burger with aged NYS cheddar on a brioche bun

Ian: 2014 Durandière Saumur Cabernet Franc Rouge (Loire Valley) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) Blended with a touch of Cabernet Sauvignon, it is violet rimmed in the glass with notes of red and black fruits and buttered toast, supple tannins and a round finish. *Smoky grilled lamb chops

Bill: 2014 Les Cassagnes de la Nerthe Cotes-du-Rhone Villages (Provence) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) A 55/35/7/3 blend of Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault and Mourvèdre has a fresh palate, a round mouthfeel and a long, luxurious finish of dried fruits. *Braised pork with red wine, see recipe above

Brian: 2014 Chiles Canyon Vineyards Green & Red Zinfandel (Napa Valley) \$23.49 (reg \$27.99) 90 W&S A blend of grapes from three high-elevation vineyards overlooking Chiles Canyon, it has dark cherry and black raspberry flavors laced with bay leaf and baking spices. *Sheila's Kahlua Chili