

Week of 09-18-07

Red Bag Clues: Serve in a Syrah Glass

Grape -

This grape typically displays firm tannins (although they are typically ripe and smooth, not abrasive like younger reds can be), a fuller body, and the rich round flavors of black cherry, blackberry, plum, bell pepper, black pepper, clove, licorice, dark chocolate and smoked meat.

Makes a beautiful full bodied red sparkling wine. If you ever have the chance you should try one.

The offspring of two obscure French varieties, Dureza and Mondeuse Blanche. (Dureza, native to the Ardeche, Mondeuse Blanche "White Mondeuse", native to the Savoie)

Known by many other names: Antourenein Noir, Balsamina, Candive, Entournerein, Hignin Noir, Marsanne Noir, Serine, and Sereine

It's written like this in it's native land; **شیراز**. Where its name is believed to have originated.

Region -

This countries largest wine growing area.

Also the largest in the world.

Known as ideal vineyard country due to the quality of the fruit, the ripening cycle, long sun drenched days and the health of the vines.

Although this is a large area, the flat geography and the soil is remarkably consistent red-brown sandy clay, poor in organic content and rich in limestone and chalk. Limestone outcroppings are frequent and must be broken up to allow the roots of the vines to prosper.

Summer temperatures often exceed 110, while the winter thermometer will see temperatures as low as 10.

This government approved growing area bares the mark of a man on a horse.

Producer –

A fourth generation family winery.

Producing wines from 7-15 years old vines.

Their soil is composed of limestone and clay.

They harvested this wine September 12th 22nd of 2005.

Your Best Guess???

Shiraz

The capital of Fars province, city of poets, wine and flowers

Shiraz is the capital of Fars province, one of the most beautiful, historical cities in the world. Farsi (Persian or Parsi) the language of Ancient Fars (Pars), has become the official language of Iran (Persia).

Shiraz with more than 850,000 inhabitants situated in southwestern Iran, in the inland around 200 km from the Persian Gulf, at an elevation of 1,800 metres above sea level.



Persepolis capital of Achaemenid Empire 500 B.C.

Different people have lived in the Fars province such as the Aryans, the Samis and the Turks, who worked together to form the Iranian culture.

The first Capital of Fars, some 2500 years ago, was Pasargad. It was also the capital of [Achaemenid](#) King [Cyrus the Great](#). The ceremonial capital of his successor, [Darius I](#) (or Darius the Great), and his son Xerxes, was [Persepolis](#). Today, only the ruins of these two capitals remain. Stakhr was another capital of Fars. It was established by the [Sassanids](#) and lasted until Shiraz finally assumed the role of the regional capital.

Shiraz is also the birthplace and resting place of the great Persian poets [Hafez](#) and [Saadi](#). There are two remarkable monuments in Shiraz. One is dedicated to Hafez, the master of Persian lyrical poetry. The other one is dedicated to Sa'adi, the author of the famous Golestan, a book of sonnets called the Garden of Roses.

According to Islamic historians, Shiraz came into existence only after the Arab conquest of Iran. The Arab invasion, in fact, contributed to its importance and by the 13th century, Shiraz had grown into one the largest and most popular Islamic cities of the era. Shiraz lies spread out like an immense garden on a green plain at the foot of the Tang Allah-o-Akbar Mountains.



Masjid-e Vakil

The most interesting buildings in Shiraz are located in the old part of the town. Among them are about a dozen mosques, some with bulb-shaped domes, and others with pear shaped domes and cupolas. These mosques are mostly scattered in among the old houses.

The Masjid-e-Vakil (the Regent Mosque) has an impressive portal containing faience panels in floral designs with various shades and colors on each side. The northern iwan (verandah) is decorated with shrubs and flowers, mainly rose bushes. The ceiling in Mihrab Chamber (altar) is covered with small cupolas resting on twisted columns. Vakil Bazaar, which is close by, was built by Karim Khan Zand. Here silversmiths and jewelers still apply their trades of exquisite inlay work. Persian carpets and other traditional Persian handicrafts may also be purchased in the Vakil Bazaar.

About 50 km. Northwest of Shiraz, at the foot of the Rahmat Mountains, one encounters the vast platform and remains of Persepolis, the grand ceremonial capital built by Darius I (Darius the Great) and his successors some 2500 years ago. Archeologists are still combing through the debris and ashes that have covered Persepolis since Alexander the Great destroyed it in 330 BC. Most of the structures have already been revealed.

Pasargad is located about 77 km away from Persepolis. It was built by Cyrus the Great. Among the interesting sites at Pasargad is a stone platform 80 m. long and 18 m. wide. It is believed to have been the foundation of a palace. Close by are the ruins of a building called the Prison of Solomon which was probably a fire temple.



Tomb of Cyrus The Great in Pasargad

The most important monument in Pasargad is undoubtedly the tomb of Cyrus the Great. It has seven broad steps leading to the sepulcher, which measures 53.4m. in length by 53.1m in width and has a low and narrow entrance. When Alexander the Great looted and destroyed Persepolis, he paid a visit to the tomb of Cyrus. It is recorded that he commanded Aristobulus, one of his warriors, to enter the monument. Inside he found a golden bed, a table set with drinking vessels, a gold coffin, some ornaments studded with precious stones and an inscription of the tomb, which reads:

***"Passer-by, I am Cyrus the Great, I have given the Persians an empire and I have ruled over Asia.
So do not envy me for this tomb."***

Shiraz



Shiraz is known as the poetic capital of Persia, because two of the greatest poets of the world, Hafez (1324-1391) and Sa'di (1209-1291), come from this city. Sa'di, the traveler, was born in Baghdad and saw a great part of the world before he finally settled in Shiraz, where he died. Hafez on the other hand, was born in Shiraz and, except for one very short journey, never even left his city.

So it's logical we start our stay in Shiraz with a visit to their mausolea. At the mausoleum of Sa'di it is unnervingly quiet, the door is open but there's nobody there. We discover why when we arrive at the mausoleum of Hafez. Today, it happens to be Hafez Memorial Day and every Iranian who loves poetry has come here to commemorate the great poet while reading, reciting or listening to some of his poems.

For us, this is a very strange experience. We can't imagine so many young people would come to a Vondel Day in Holland. Iranians must truly love their poetry. Our Iranian guide Shervin surprises us, he recites a beautiful poem of Sa'di, by heart.

When it's almost dark, we go to the Shrine of Shah Cheragh. This is the tomb of Seyed Amir Ahmad, the brother of Imam Reza, the 8th Imam. The outside of the Shrine looks absolutely fabulous in the dark. The Shrine is a Holy Place and an important place for pilgrimage, but it is open to non-Muslims, as long as you ask permission first and under the condition that women wear a chador. We are even allowed to look inside, where a service is going on. We see a lot of grief come out, men throw themselves against the tomb, women are crying, and there are people praying everywhere. While at the same time a little boy is walking around serving tea. This service is something we have never seen in our lives, still a little bit shaken we leave for our hotel. The next morning, we go back to the Shrine, but it doesn't have the magic anymore it had in the dark.



Bagh-é Eram translates as Garden of Paradise. This is a large garden with a wonderful looking palace in it. The mosaics on the walls of the palace tell stories about the life of Shah Abbas the Great, who is recognizable by his big moustache.

That is ... we thought it was Shah Abbas. You know, a guy on a horse with a big moustache, that must be Abbas. Well, actually this is Naser o'Din Shah Qajar, as Kamran wrote us.



For a while we look at the palace, then we walk a bit through the garden and finally we settle on a bench to watch the schoolchildren play. At first, we feel a bit like one of the sights of Shiraz, but after ten minutes the kids get used to us and things calm down.

We sit here for almost an hour, then it's time to become active again. But first, lunch! Who was it that suggested a 'light snack' at the Homa Hotel?

After lunch we visit one of Shiraz' merchant houses, called the Naranjestan Estate. This house was built purely for the multiple glory of the merchant, and it shows. We know Iranians love tiled mirrors, but this seems a bit overdone. But after a few minutes you get used to this extravaganza. We even started to like it.



When visiting time is over, we head for the bazaar. Pieter promised his mother to take some real Iranian cloth with him, so we spend almost an hour comparing the wares and prices of the different shops and another hour bargaining for a good price.

ROJO MOJO

Rojo Mojo is a Shiraz red wine dry grown on red brown sandy clay rich in limestone and chalk in the Villarobledo region of La Mancha.

Varietal Blend: SHIRAZ 100%

Vintage: 2005

Appellation: D.O. La Mancha

Total Production: (9lt cases) 33,000

TASTING NOTES:

Color: Crimson with violet tinges

Nose: Intense stewed cherry and blackberry fruit characters followed by tobacco, cinnamon, black pepper and cloves

Palate: A full bodied expansive wine providing a big fruit blast with firm yet friendly tannins

Finish: Pleasant and satisfying

DOMAIN

La Mancha is Spain's largest denomination of origin and the world's largest wine producing area. Despite low yields La Mancha is known as ideal vineyard country due to the quality of the fruit, the ripening cycle, long sun drenched days and the health of the vines. Although this is a large area, the flat geography and the soil is remarkably consistent – red-brown sandy clay, poor in organic content and rich in limestone and chalk. Limestone outcroppings are frequent and must be broken up to allow the roots of the vines to prosper. La Mancha's plains, sitting at an average of some 2,100 feet have an archetypal continental climate: Icy winters give way to torrid summers. Summer temperatures often exceed 110°, while the winter thermometer will see temperatures as low as 10°.

VINIFICATION

The grapes underwent two to three days of cold pre-fermentation maceration to enhance color and flavor extraction. The must was then inoculated with selected yeasts and fermented at 82°C with four daily pumpovers. Post-fermentation maceration lasted 20 to 30 days to achieve the fullest extraction and body. The wine was then drawn off the skins and seeds, and the free-run wine was separated from the press wine. Aged 100% in stainless steel.

TECHNICAL DATA

pH: 3.6

VA: 0.4 g/l

Malolactic: Yes

Alcohol: 13.0%

RS: 5.5 g/l

Free SO₂: 35 mg/l

Lees contact: no

TA: 5.2 g/l

Total SO₂: 60 mg/l

Fining method: Egg Albumin

WINEMAKER: Juan Jose Marchante

Bodegas Lozano, a fourth generation family winery is located in Villarrobledo

Age of vines: 7-15 years old

Soil composition: Limestone and clay soils

Climate: Continental

Harvest Date: September 12th – 22nd 2005

Harvest conditions/insights: The 2005 vintage was characterized by a production 30% smaller than the previous year. Important maturation of the grapes and small yields generated a high quality level for this vintage.

Harvest method: 70% hand-picked, 30% machine

Ratings/Reviews

Rating by RobertParker.com

The Independent Consumer's Guide to Fine Wines

Rating: 86 points

The 2005 Rojo Mojo Shiraz, a 100% Syrah, stainless steel fermented and aged wine, shows surprising varietal character in its smoky, meaty nose. The fruit is forward and juicy with very good length. It is the perfect accompaniment to spicy Italian sausages or a grilled lamb steak.— Jay Miller (Feb 2007)

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