



Wine Club Tasting Notes

March 2008

2005 Yalumba “Y Series”
Shiraz/Viognier
Barossa Valley, Australia

Yes, you’re looking at this correctly; there is Viognier (5%) in this Shiraz. The French in Cote Rotie have been using this practice for years, and recently the trend has started to catch on in Australia. Simply put, it adds a bit of finesse and aromatics to the finished product. Since I gave you a little history of the winery in the first set of notes, in this section I’ll tell you a little about the history of the Syrah grape, otherwise known as Shiraz in Australia.

Syrah is a high-quality red-wine grape that gained its reputation in France's Rhone region. Thought to have originated in the Middle East, the ancient Syrah grape has been grown in the Rhône valley at least since Roman times. In the northern Rhône, Syrah is the principal grape of the esteemed wines from Cornas, Cote Rotie, Crozes Hermitage, Hermitage and Saint Joseph. When young, these wines are deep-colored and tannic, with strong tar, spice and pepper qualities. Syrahs are long-lived, and as they slowly mature, they take on characteristics of sweet blackberries, black currants, and plums, with hints of smokiness. In the Southern Rhône, Syrah is used to contribute flavor and structure to the multi-variety wines from Chateauneuf du Pape and Cotes du Rhone. France's Languedoc Roussillon region has been planting large amounts of new Syrah acreage because it's one of the grapes recommended for improving the quality of that region's wines.

Shiraz, as Syrah is called in Australia, made its way there in the 1830s and is now that country's most widely planted red grape. Because this grape's so widely cultivated in Australia, an extensive variety of wine styles are produced there – from jug wines to very serious wines of international renown. The best of these auspicious wines come from Coonawarra and the Barossa and Hunter Valleys. The most famous Shiraz is the incredibly rich and complex Grange Hermitage, produced by Penfolds.

Yalumba Y Series Shiraz Viognier is bright and youthful, with a nose that is full of spices, licorice and plum fruits, and the subtle hints of Viognier are emphasized by soft jam of fresh purple grape aromas. The palate is chewy and delicious with lush blueberry and plum fruits, framed by supple tannins. The finish is smooth, silky and savory. This wine is undoubtedly one of the best

Shiraz's in its price range that Australia has to offer. It is the perfect for grilled meats such as lamb or for how I enjoyed it the other night – just the bottle and a couple of friends!