SHIRAZ



Is it Shiraz or is it Syrah? Is there a difference? Well no, not really. These are two names for the exact same grape variety and whether you use one or the other really depends on the style in which you are making it. Either way, this is one of SA's most popular black grape varieties and one which flourishes throughout the Cape, both by itself and increasingly as the foundation for some really exciting, modern-style blends.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Traditionally, Shiraz has liked the sunshine and some of SA's greatest successes are still to be found in warmer areas such as Swartland and Stellenbosch, in particular, the Golden Triangle region found to the south of the town, stretching up into the Helderberg mountains. But recent experiments with cooler climes are proving extremely popular, especially as research now shows that Syrah's signature 'peppery/violet' aromas develop best in grapes

OPTIMAL SERVING TEMPERATURE:

15-20°C

* according to wine.co.za



which ripen more slowly. Coastal plantings in Durbanville and now in Elim are proving very successful, confusing many a wine fundi into thinking he or she is drinking Côte Rôtie or Hermitage.

WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

There are two fairly distinct styles of Shiraz/Syrah (see below) and it's a grape which reflects both the terroir in which its grown as well as the winemaker who makes it. Generally-speaking, it's got ripe, lush flavours of black fruit – plums, cherries, blackberries and currants – usually lifted by distinctive aromas of black and white pepper, cloves, cinnamon and flowers, particularly violets. A lot depends on the type of oak used as Shiraz is one of the few varieties which gets on well with American oak, giving it distinctive smoked meat flavours with hints of





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WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

It was thought that Shiraz originated from Persia (hence Shiraz and not Syrah) but recent research has proved that actually it comes from the region where it makes its most famous wines, the Rhône Valley in France. It's also strongly associated with Australia, particularly the Barossa Valley where it makes wines from vines which can be over 100 years old. Traditionally, if you make it in an elegant style, using French oak and emphasising the perfumed aromatics, you call it Syrah whereas if you go for a full-bodied, meaty style with hints of chocolate and spice and use American oak, then you'd call it Shiraz. But the plain truth is that most winemakers simply use whichever term they think will sell most wine.

WHAT SHOULD WE EAT WITH IT?

Shiraz could have been made for South African cuisine, as long as you're a meat-eater that is! It's packed with spices and always has a lovely peppery undertone so goes really well with game meats, either fresh or dried – a charcuterie board and Shiraz is the perfect pairing. If you're not a big steak-fan, lighter versions also work well with tuna and hearty chicken dishes whilst the smooth tannins make this a good wine to sip by itself over a long evening with friends. cheese itself.







How does the flavour develop?

VINEYARD INFLUENCE:

Blackberry, Black cherry, Black olive, Liquorice, Mint, Raspberry, Blackpepper, Cloves, Nutmeg, Cinnamon, Raisins

WINE MAKING INFLUENCE:

Vanilla, Coconut, Cedar, Pencil shavings, Sawdust, Cedar wood, Toast, Burnt

BOTTLE AGING INFLUENCE:

Coffee, Soy, Mushrooms, Chocolate, Cigar box, Prune, Salami, Meaty

