

theVineking 

Explore great wine without the nonsense

Shortlisted for
Best Subscription Wine Club



At its core, Syrah and Shiraz wines are both made from the Syrah grape – but that is where the similarities end. Differences lie in where the grapes are grown, and on a basic level Syrah is from France and Shiraz is from Australia. France has always been considered the spiritual homeland of the Syrah grape and it was transported down under to Australia in the late 19th century by James Busby, a Scottish viticulturalist, where the variety has been the mainstay of Australian winemaking ever since.

Now, let's address the most obvious difference between the two grapes – those names! Syrah is the original placeholder, and no one knows why the Aussies started calling it Shiraz; perhaps it was the accent or an accident? However it came about, the Aussies have certainly made the name synonymous with the Aussie style of winemaking: big and bold!

While Shiraz is grown all over Australia, plots of Syrah from France is mostly concentrated in the Rhône region where appellations such as Hermitage, Cornas and Côte Rotie pride themselves on their wines made from 100% Syrah. It might be tempting to think that all Syrah comes from France, and that all Shiraz is from Australia, but it's not that simple. Syrah grows all over the world, from France to Australia, and everywhere in between. Some countries of note, now making waves with the variety are: New Zealand, South Africa and Chile (all showcased in this month's selection). Wineries in these regions often use Syrah/Shiraz on their labels to denote style: the use of 'Shiraz' on the label would indicate that the wine inside is a ripe, rich, fruit-forward wine made in the Australian spirit, whereas a bottle labelled 'Syrah' would signpost to a more European style of wine that is more savoury. At this point, the names have gone from being an indication of origin to an indication of winemaking choice and style.

And as if that is already confusing enough, in recent years, some wineries in Australia have been labelling their Shiraz as Syrah, if the style they crafted is closer in style to that of the Rhône. And even some French wineries have been known to label their Syrah as Shiraz if the style produced is reminiscent of their Aussie friends. What a topsy turvy world it is!

One thing you can rely on is flavour when it comes to both iterations of the grape – there are some core varietals that will not change no matter what country or climate the grapes come from. Whether it's called Syrah or Shiraz, you can rely on your wine to have this overall flavour profile: dark berry fruit (blueberries, blackberries), medium to high tannins, a peppery palate and a long, dry finish. Interestingly, to those of a scientific persuasion anyway, the black pepper note, indicative of most if not all Syrah/Shiraz is due to a naturally occurring chemical called Rotundone. It is also found in rosemary, thyme, and funnily enough, black peppercorns! While the two styles have these characteristics, they can still be wildly different.

French and other European Syrah will typically emphasize the natural herbaceous quality of the grape, with the fruit flavours taking a backseat. Syrah from the Northern Rhône will usually combine flavours of blackberries, cherries, and blueberries with a more floral bouquet and a savoury palate of black pepper, olive tapenade and cured meat. Northern Rhône Syrah are typically leaner – the tannins aren't going to be plush and velvety, but rather spikier and crunchier, and of course complemented by that classic note of cracked black peppercorns.

The Australian style of Shiraz, on the other hand, is typically more full-bodied (and high in alcohol.), ripe and concentrated. They can tend to be a bit in-your-face, but these fruit-forward wines are full of warm personality and are really fun wines to explore.

So, without further ado, dive into this month's case, packed full of deliciously hearty reds and let us know where the differences and similarities lie.

Regular Price: £174.94 Case Price: £139.95 **Wine Club Price: £129**



2022 Cave de Tain Exploration Sans Sulfites Ajoutés Syrah, Rhône – 12.5%, £16.99

For Cave de Tain, a renowned producer since 1933, committed to sustainable viticulture, the making of a 'Sans Sulfites' Syrah isn't just an experiment or an attempt to keep up with modern winemaking trends; it is the epitome of the winery's philosophy. They have been certified organic since 2009 but have always taken such things seriously. Most, if not all, of the Cave's growers practice organic viticulture as part of the strict sustainable practices laid down by the Vignerons en Développement Durable (VDD). The health of their vines is of the utmost importance, and practices such as 'epillonnage' (removing secondary shoots to aerate the grapes) are used to increase the vines resistance to humidity and reduce the use of chemical treatments in the vineyards. The Cave only source their fruit from vineyards a maximum of 15km away from the winery, meaning the grape harvest is delivered quickly and in prime condition, negating the need to add sulphur. In the winery, which has been heavily invested in during the last decade, hygiene control measures are impeccable, which is another key factor in making a wine 'sans sulphite' possible in the first place.

This wine has quite a serious nose of dried fruit and blueberries, followed by juicy, wild autumn stone fruit such as plums, damsons and sloes, all complemented by a savoury edge. Supple tannins and a beautiful vibrancy and freshness that you would expect from a proper northern Rhône Syrah such as this.

Perfect with grilled meats and game terrines. Also, a delicious pairing for soft, yet strong cheeses, such as Camembert and Brie, and even gooey blue cheeses such as Roquefort.

2019 Tabalí Pedregoso Gran Reserva Syrah, Limarí, Chile - 14%, £18.99

Tabalí is an icon of Chile, despite only being established a mere 22 years ago. Located on the edge of the Atacama Desert, it is one of Chile's northernmost wineries. They were one of the first to settle in Limarí and their wines faithfully reflect their terroir, unique climate and soils. They are also the only winery whose vineyards cross the full width of Chile, west to east the full length of the Limarí Valley.

The geology of the Limarí Valley has a rather interesting influence upon the Syrah grown in the vineyards and the resulting wines produced. The soil is very stony but has veins of limestone running through it. The limestone rocks in the high peaks of the Andes mountains were dragged down by melting ice to the lower parts of the valley and deposited there as dust mixed with the alluvial soils (most often associated with ancient riverbeds). The limestone produces refreshing, mineral wines in a style quite different to those produced in the rest of the country, even in the cooler areas. So, while you may expect this new world Syrah to be a big, jammy example of the variety (almost like Shiraz), you will be surprised to experience a certain lightness and elegance in this wine.



This wine has a dense beetroot red hue, which is the result of high altitude, long exposure to sunshine and a large diurnal range. Aromas of warm star anise and ripe damson fruit jump out of the glass to greet you on the nose, and the palate is rich yet elegant with classic notes of dark berry fruit and black pepper. Pair with roast beef or lamb, or a charcuterie board with a variety of fresh cheeses and cured meats.

2019 Smith & Sheth Cru Heretaunga Syrah, Heretaunga, New Zealand – 13.5%, £49.99

Heretaunga (a.k.a. Hawke's Bay) is the birthplace of Smith & Sheth, located on the southern borders of the warm Bridge Pa appellation. The grapes are sourced from a combination of private growers and Smith & Sheth's own estates, which are all on the region's classic gravel soils. The winery has a real affinity for the French winemaking tradition of terroir, and in New Zealand the Maori word for this is Tūrangawaewae which means 'a special place in the world where one feels connected and empowered'. This word described the special connection of a people to the land they live and work on, and Smith & Sheth honour this by selecting only the very best fruit, from the most exceptional vineyards. They then nurture, blend and bottle wines that express the beauty and character of a place, and the passion of its people under the CRU label.

theVineking™



Explore great wine without the nonsense



This Syrah is intensely fragrant, packed with aromas of black olive tapenade and liquorice on the nose. Lashings of dark berries, winter spice and freshly cracked peppercorns on the palate, with fine tannins and a rich and luxurious finish.

Pair with game meats, such as duck and goose and oriental dishes such as 5-Spice sticky pork ribs. It would also work well with Mediterranean dishes such as Aubergine Parmigiana.

2019 Waterkloof Circumstance Syrah, Stellenbosch, South Africa - 14%, £22.99

The Circumstance Syrah is from a single, windswept, south-facing vineyard a mere 2 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. These factors combine to produce low yields, grapes with balanced levels of natural sugars and acidity, which produce wines with a true sense of place. The grapes are hand-harvested and fermented in whole bunches in open top wooden fermenters, incredibly traditional in today's modern winemaking arena. The wine is aged in small wooden barrels for 22 months prior to release – it is bottled unfiltered and unfined, which preserves as much of the wine's flavours and character as possible. Filtration takes away the micro-sediments which add texture and complexity to a finished wine, so the wines are better for having not undergone this process.

Black pepper and spice on the nose, this is a classic expression of Syrah from South Africa, complemented by aromas of ripe black fruits, wildflowers, dried herbs and wood smoke. The palate is fresh and supple, with ripe plum and black cherry fruit, with hints of cocoa. Refreshing acidity on the palate means this is a fruity but not jammy wine, well-structured with a slightly savoury finish. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this would be perfect for a braai! Paired with generous helpings of freshly grilled sirloin steak, remind this wine that its roots are in France and serve with rosemary and thyme roasted new potatoes.

2020 Glaetzer 'The Bishop' Shiraz, Barossa, Australia – 14.5%, £39.99

This family-owned and quite frankly iconic winery was founded in 1995 and dedicates itself to the production of super-premium red wines, made in incredibly small quantities. The Glaetzer family were originally from Germany and settled in Australia in the late 19th century where they are recorded as being some of the earliest viticulturalists in the Clare and Barossa Valleys. Today the winery is run by the 'Baron of Barossa', Qantas Young Winemaker of the Year 2004 (when he was just 27!), Ben Glaetzer, who focuses on producing red wines from the ancient bush vines of Barossa, some up to 110 years old. Minimal intervention is the key here – the fruit is of such great quality that the wines really speak for themselves.

Prepare yourself (and your glasses) for this big, bold Shiraz – it is dark and brooding with rich aromas of cassis and freshly ground coffee on the nose, with a palate packed with flavours of black cherry, dark chocolate, baking spice and black pepper.

Enjoy with hearty root vegetable stews or tagines, lamb cutlets, steak frites with peppercorn sauce or a good honest cheeseburger.





2019 Borsao Zarihs (Old Vine Shiraz), Campo de Borja, Spain - 15%, £25.99

Borsao winery was established as a co-operative in 1959 and the vineyards are located in the foothills of the Moncayo mountains, ranging from around 350 to 800 metres above sea level. Here the climate is severe and arid, with extremely hot days and very cool nights – which allow optimum acidity levels to be maintained in the grapes. The Syrah vines were planted over 22 years ago, which means they can be called ‘Old Vines’. They produce slightly reduced yields of grapes, but those that they do produce are of higher quality and are more intensely flavoured than their younger counterparts.

At the winery, the grapes for this wine are left macerating on their skins for 4-5 days prior to fermentation; this extracts generous amounts of tannin and colour from the skins and results in the wine being deep in colour with lots of grip. This wine is intense, with lush aromas of ripe black fruits, sweet cassis notes with hints of coffee and warm vanilla spice, indicative of a portion of the wine spending 12 months ageing in new American oak barrels. Wild blackcurrant and classic black pepper on the palate, this wine is rich and powerful yet wonderfully balanced.

Serve with slow roasted lamb or beef, and platters of roasted Mediterranean vegetables.



Deep Purple

Syrah Wine



Syrah Grapes

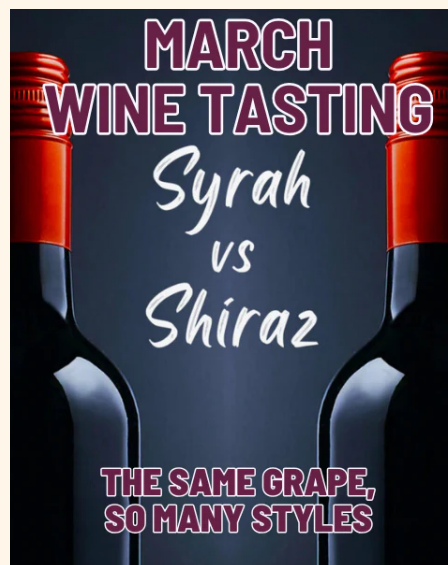
Vitis vinifera



Regular Price: £174.94 Case Price: £139.95 **Wine Club Price: £129**

WHAT'S ON AT THE VINEKING

Join us in for our Monthly Wine Tastings
Pop Up Restaurant nights, and wine and dining experiences



Discover What's On and Book on www.thevineking.com