



SYRAH (*aka. Shiraz, Hermitage, Marsanne Noir*)

The heat-loving Syrah grape variety has adapted well to both the warm venues of California, Southern Oregon and Washington, as well as to a revival in interest of robust and heavy red wines. Increasingly planted in many of North America's more prolific viticultural areas, it has been enthusiastically produced and marketed by a group of winemakers calling themselves the "Rhône Rangers".

This ancient varietal is native to the northern Rhône, where it produces the very long-lived, tannic and spicy red wines of AOCs Côte Rôtie, Hermitage, and Cornas. Further south, it provides weight and structure to the softer, more obviously fruity, Grenache-based reds of the Côtes du Rhône. Along with Mourvèdre, Syrah is an important component in the best examples of the southern Rhône's most famous appellation, Châteauneuf du Pape.

Arguably, Syrah owes its dramatic 20th century rise in prominence to its incredible popularity and success in Australian vineyards, where it assumes the name Shiraz. The Australian versions tend to be much more intensely fruit driven with less hard-edged angularity in youth, despite possessing significant amounts of tannin and characteristic peppery spiciness. Shiraz's combination of rich character and approachability in youth can largely be credited with securing Australia's global reputation as a leading source of highly-character, value-priced wines.