

Petit Verdot climbed onto my radar screen in 1995. That year I had the pleasure to visit Bordeaux and meet a number of vintners. The two most significant experiences I had were; first watching the winemakers in Bordeaux calmly wait out the torrential rains that preceded the 1995 vintage, and second was that everyone I spoke with couldn't sing the praises for Petit Verdot any louder. At the time I queried them as to why they didn't grow more as the largest plantings never exceeded 6-7% of their vineyards. Their response was to look out the window and point out the weather; they just didn't have the sunshine and heat to ripen a variety that matures after Cabernet Sauvignon. Every vintner expressed praise for the deep color, rich cassis flavors and structure that Petit Verdot could contribute to a cuvee. More often than not the list of the virtues of Petit Verdot was followed by an expression of the frustration they experienced it attempting to get it ripe.

In a Boeing 747 at 37,000 feet hurtling west to the land of abundant sunshine it occurred to me that the late ripening nature of Petit Verdot would probably not be an issue in California, and I started to look for an opportunity to explore my new found curiosity about this variety. It was just three years later, after completing my first vintage with McManis Family Vineyards, that I expressed my desire to work with Petit Verdot to Ron McManis. He sensed, and soon shared, my enthusiasm for Petit Verdot and for the next thirteen years I have had the pleasure of working with Petit Verdot. I have experienced first-hand the benefits of including Petit Verdot in blends ranging from Pinot Noir to Cabernet Sauvignon. Given the depth of color and deep rich black fruit driven flavors it is not unlike Petite Sirah, and like Petite Sirah I eventually decided it was time to offer this Petit Verdot as a 'stand alone' wine in the Jeff Runquist Wines portfolio of offerings. In 2009 we barreled down six hundred gallons and after just over a year of aging blended and bottled the wine. The small quantity soon disappeared but not without generating a good deal of excitement about this often overlooked Bordeaux variety

Now it is time to introduce the 2010 vintage which only further builds my excitement about this grape. The 2010 has a deep purple color with carmine hue. The aromas are loaded with ripe black fruits and cassis. The time this wine spent in small oak barrels contributes a creamy caramel, hazelnut and toasted oak bouquet. On the palate there are rich flavors of black currants and black raspberries, deeply toasted oak, and dark chocolate. Soft integrated tannins add structure and body without dryness or astringency. Margie has had good success pairing the Petit Verdot with braised meats especially lamb shanks and rabbit.

Varietal Composition: 100% Petit Verdot      14.1% Alc.      0.65 g/100ml TA      3.62 pH

Oak Regime:    73% American Oak      23% French Oak

Released: March 1, 2012      835 Cases Produced      Suggested retail Price: \$24