

Winery owner believes petite sirah ideal for Sierra foothills

By Mike Dunne, Sacramento Bee

One way to cut down the number of wines to sample at a tasting where hundreds are being poured is to ask each winemaker for a taste only of his or her flagship wine.

The wording is important: Don't ask for a taste of the favorite wine – you run the risk of hearing that tired refrain that asking vintners to pick their favorite wine is akin to asking them to pick their favorite child.

At the Family Winemakers of California tasting in San Francisco late this summer, the most surprising answer to the flagship question came at the table of C.G. Di Arie Vineyard & Winery of El Dorado and Amador counties.

Without pause, owner-winemaker Chaim Gur- Arie singled out petite sirah. That was startling – he seemed likely to name a wine that more often is credited with bringing attention and acclaim to his winery, such as primitivo, zinfandel, barbera or syrah among his varietals; or among his blends, a proprietary release like "Sierra Legend," a finely tuned mix of Italian and French grapes.

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