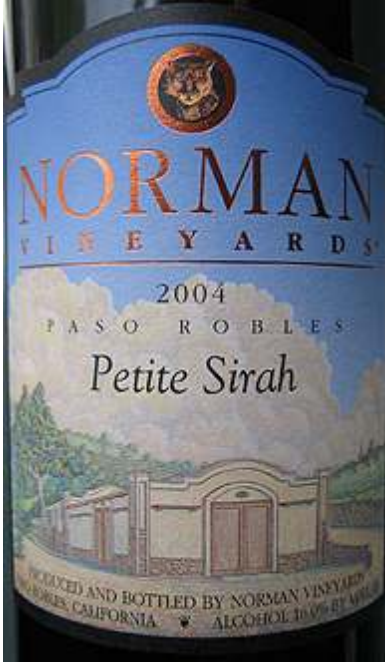


WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Norman Vineyards****2004 Petite Sirah
(Paso Robles)**

Norman Vineyards calls its flagship Zinfandel “The Monster,” but that moniker could also be applied to this big, ripe Petite Sirah. The grapes come from two vineyards on the west side of Paso Robles, one in the Adelaida Hills area and one in the cooler Templeton Gap. The wine spent 20 months in a combination of French and American oak barrels, 30 percent of which were new.

Nearly everything about this Petite is big: It’s dark, ripe and concentrated, with ample blackberry fruit, hints of tobacco and white pepper and some mocha on the finish. The tannins are quite firm and drying, so the wine calls out for some hearty food. (The winery suggests pork roast or rack of lamb; I think some spicy pork ribs might be more appropriate.) Still,

despite its jammy fruit and an alcohol content that weighs in at 16 percent alcohol, the wine doesn’t taste at all pruney or hot. There is one thing about this wine that isn’t big: the price, which is a reasonable \$20.

Reviewed April 21, 2008 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Norman Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Petite Sirah

Appellation: [Paso Robles](#)

Grape: Petite Sirah

Price: \$20.00

THE REVIEWER**Laurie Daniel**

Laurie Daniel, wine columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, has been reviewing wine for more than 10 years. She doesn’t use numbers, preferring to describe her recommended wines and let consumers decide for themselves.

Laurie believes that bigger isn’t necessarily better; she’s partial to wines of balance, finesse and character. Her particular interests are Pinot Noir (versions that really taste like Pinot, that is) and aromatic whites like Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer.