

Colorado Cultivar Camp: **SYRAH**

May 15, 2017

With special expert host

Jeb Dunnuck, Wine Advocate Reviewer



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Agenda

- All about Syrah
 - History
 - Geography
 - Biology
- Masterclass tasting – led by Jeb Dunnuck
 - Rhone, California, Washington, Australia
- Blind comparison tasting
 - Colorado vs. The World



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Jancis Robinson's Wine Course

By Jancis Robinson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r1gpZ0e84k>

All About Syrah

- History
 - Origin
 - Parentage
 - Related varieties
- Geography
 - France
 - Australia
 - USA
- Biology
 - Characteristics
 - Flavors



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History of Syrah

- Myth suggests it was brought from Shiraz, Iran to Marseille by Phocaeans.
- Or name came from Syracuse, Italy (on island of Sicily)
- Widely planted in Northern Rhône
 - Used as a blending grape in Southern Rhône
- Called Shiraz (sometimes Hermitage) in Australia
 - second largest planting of Syrah
 - Brought to Australia in 1831 by James Busby
 - Most popular cultivar in Australia by 1860
 - Export to US in 1970s
- Seventh most planted cultivar worldwide now, but only 3,300 acres in 1958



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History of Syrah

- Parentage:
 - Dureza
 - Exclusively planted in Rhône
 - In 1988, only one hectare remained
 - Mondeuse blanche
 - Savoie region of France
 - Only 5 hectares remain
- Not to be confused with Petite Sirah (Durif)
 - Cross between Syrah and Peloursin
- Synonyms: Shiraz, Sirac, Marsanne Noir, Entournerein, Serène



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Geography of Syrah

- France
 - Rhône
 - Northern Rhône
 - Cornas, Côte-Rôtie, Hermitage, St. Joseph
 - Southern Rhône
 - Blended with Grenache, Mourvèdre , et al – Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cotes du Rhône
- United States
 - California, Washington
- Australia
 - Barossa Valley, Heathcote, Margaret River



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Geography of Syrah

- France
 - Rhône



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Ge

FRANCE - NORTHERN RHÔNE

- France
- P

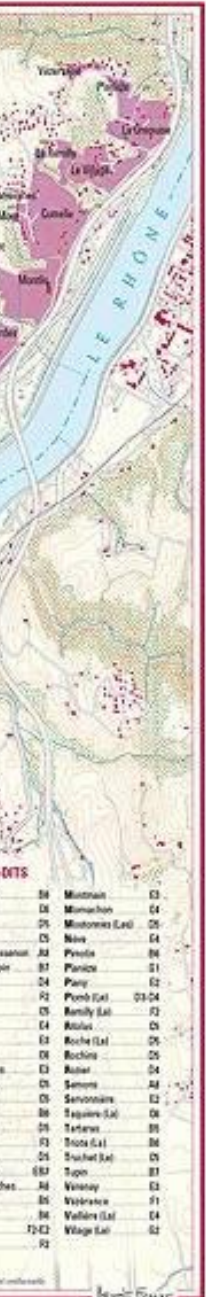


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Geography

- France
 - Rhône
 - North – including
 - Cote R



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Geography of Syrah

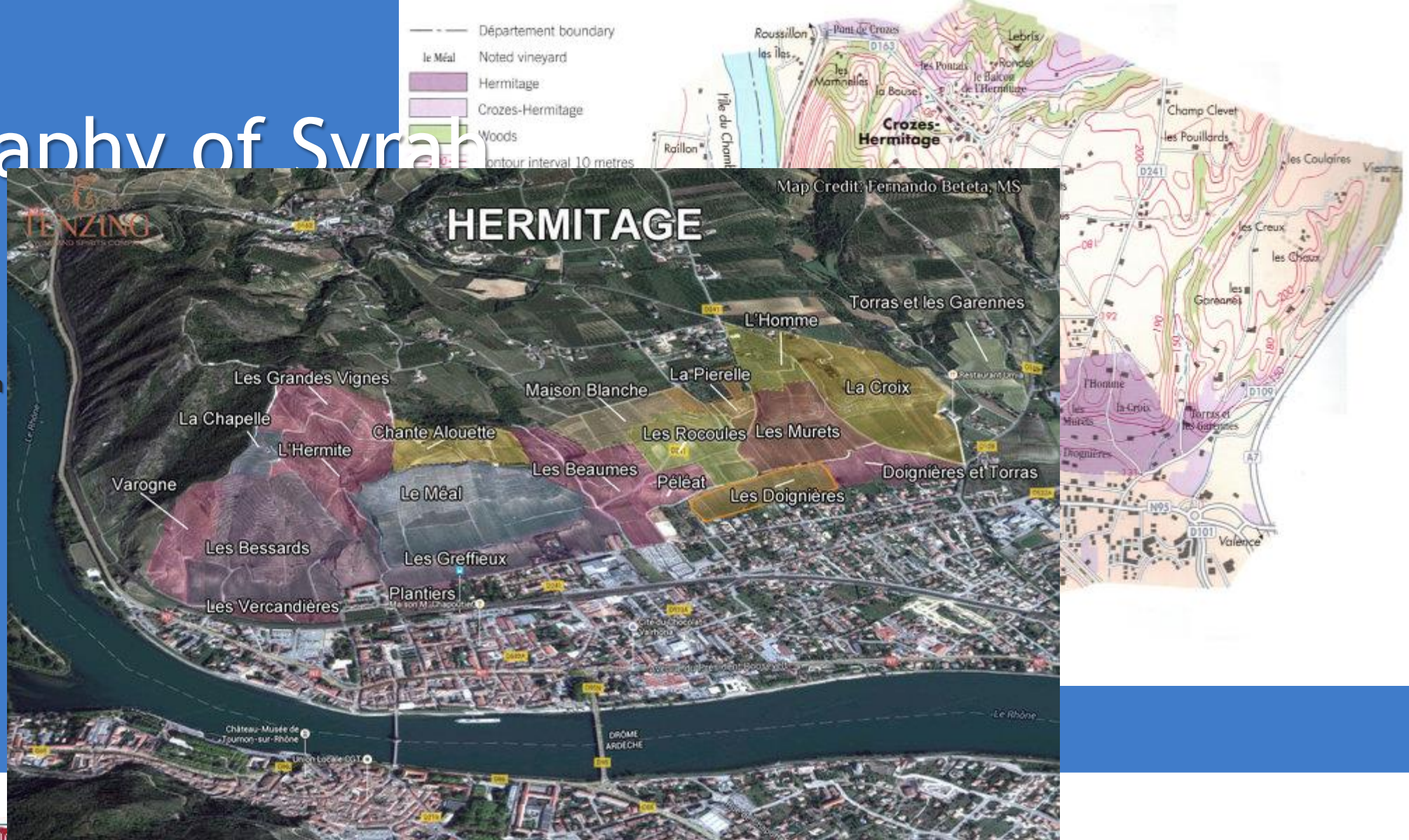
- France
 - Rhône
 - North – individual village/appellations
 - **Cote Rotie** – northern most, blended with up to 20% Viognier
 - **Saint Joseph** – long narrow region on west bank of river, up to 10% marsanne and roussanne
 - Steep terraces
 - Savory, peppery flavors of smoked meats, olives and herbs, with grace notes of violets and red and black fruits.



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Geography of Syrah

- France
 - Rhône
 - North
 -
 -
 -



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Geography of Syrah

- France
 - Rhône
 - North – individual village/appellations
 - **Cote Rotie** – northern most, blended with up to 20% Viognier
 - **Saint Joseph** – long narrow region on west bank of river, up to 10% marsanne and roussanne
 - **Hermitage** – East of river , up to 15% marsanne/roussanne
 - **Crozes-Hermitage** – larger region surrounding Hermitage
 - flatter land around the hill of Hermitage
 - Burger wines – easy drinking, not overly complex

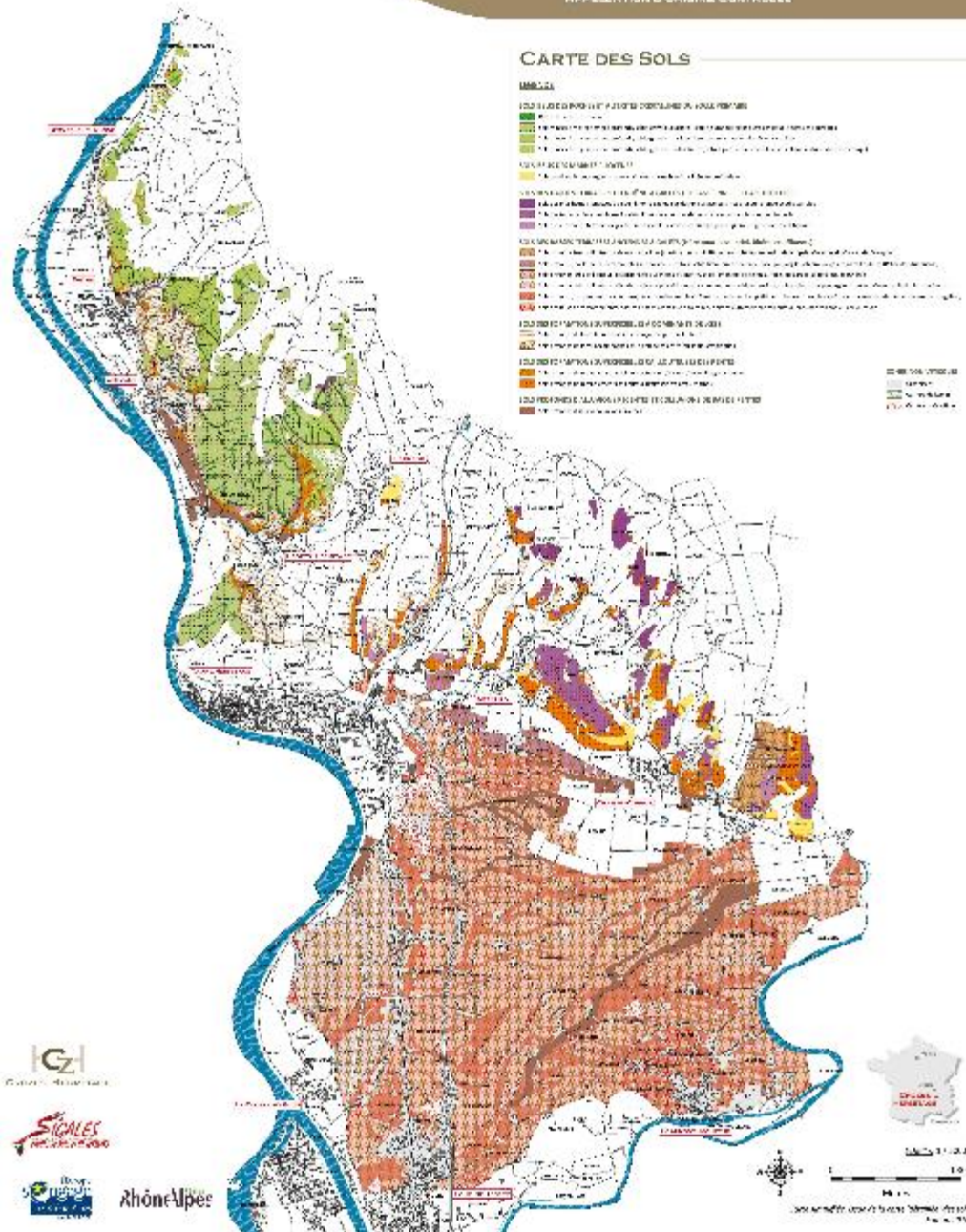
CROZES - HERMITAGE

APPELLATION D'ORIGINE CONTRÔLÉE

CARTE DES SOLS

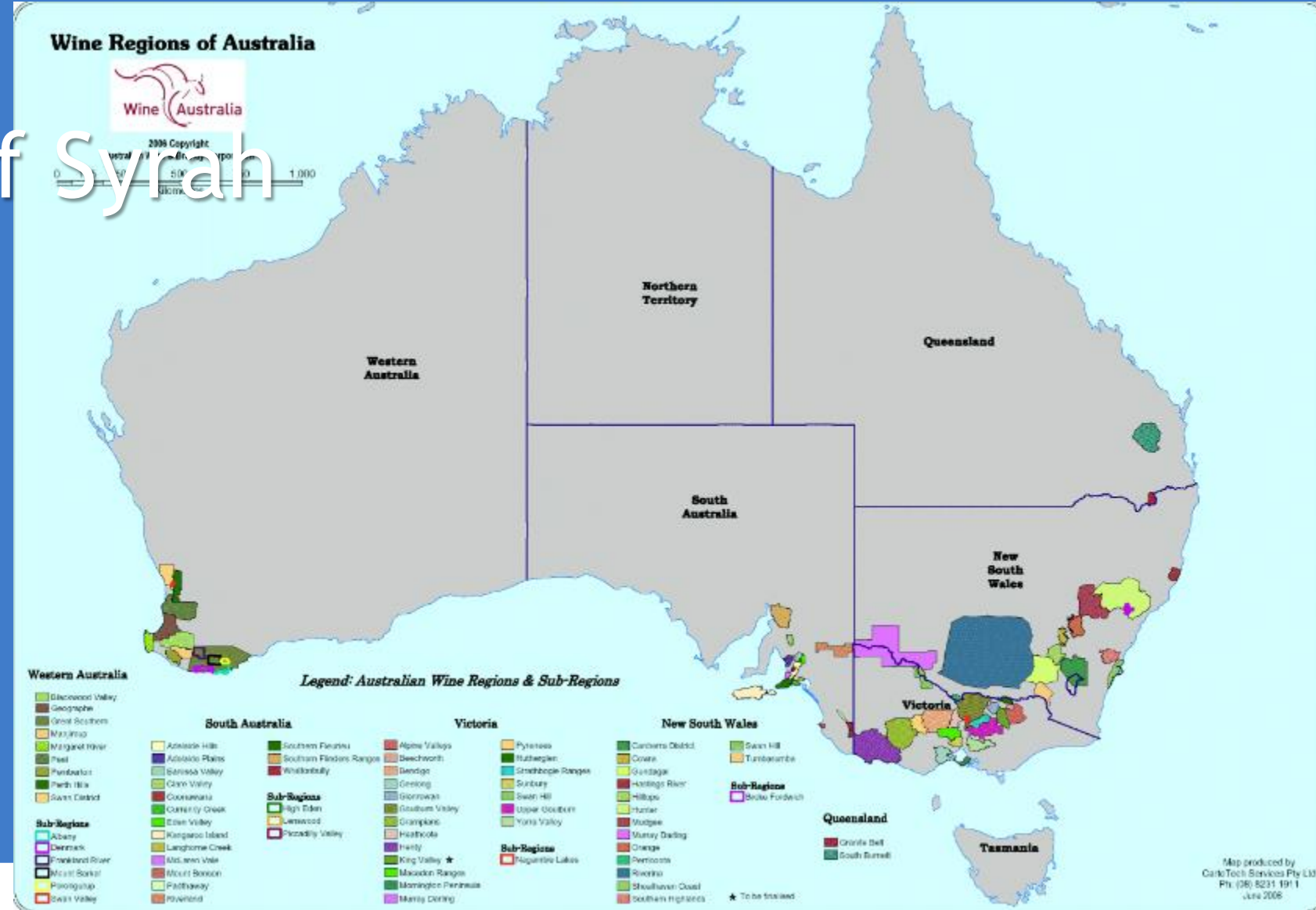


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Geography of Syrah

- Australia



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Geography of Syrah

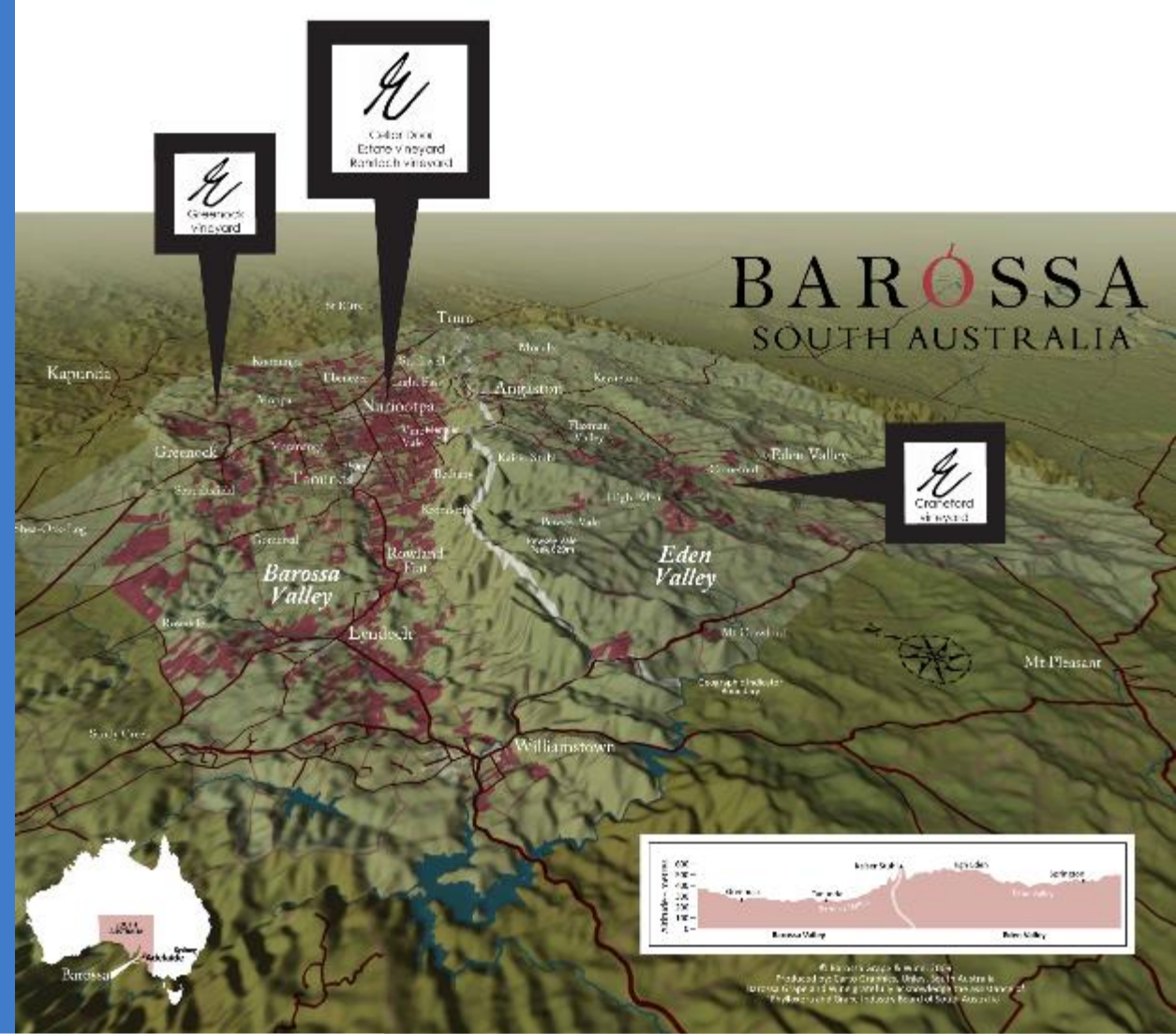
- Australia
 - South Australia



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Geography of Syrah

- Australia
 - South Australia
 - Barossa Valley
 - McLaren Vale
 - Western Australia
 - Margaret River
 - Victoria
 - Heathcote



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Geography of Syrah

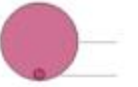
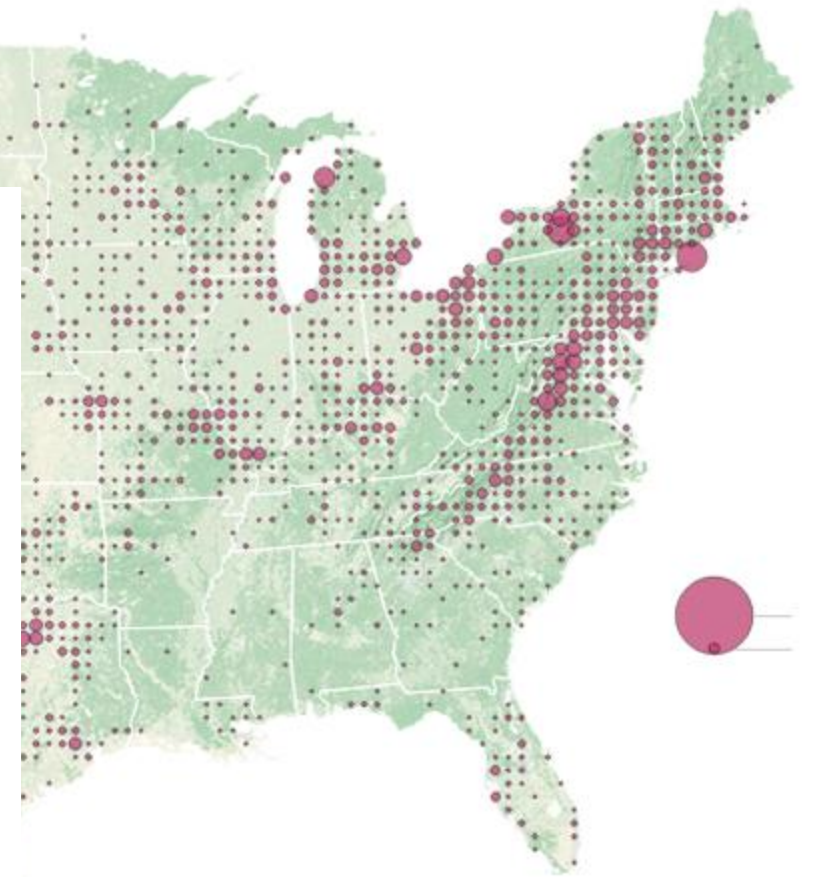
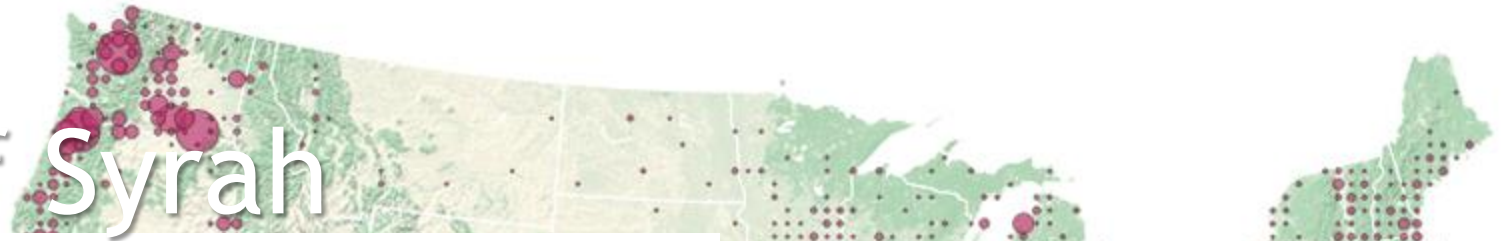


Fig. 16.1

Geography of Syrah

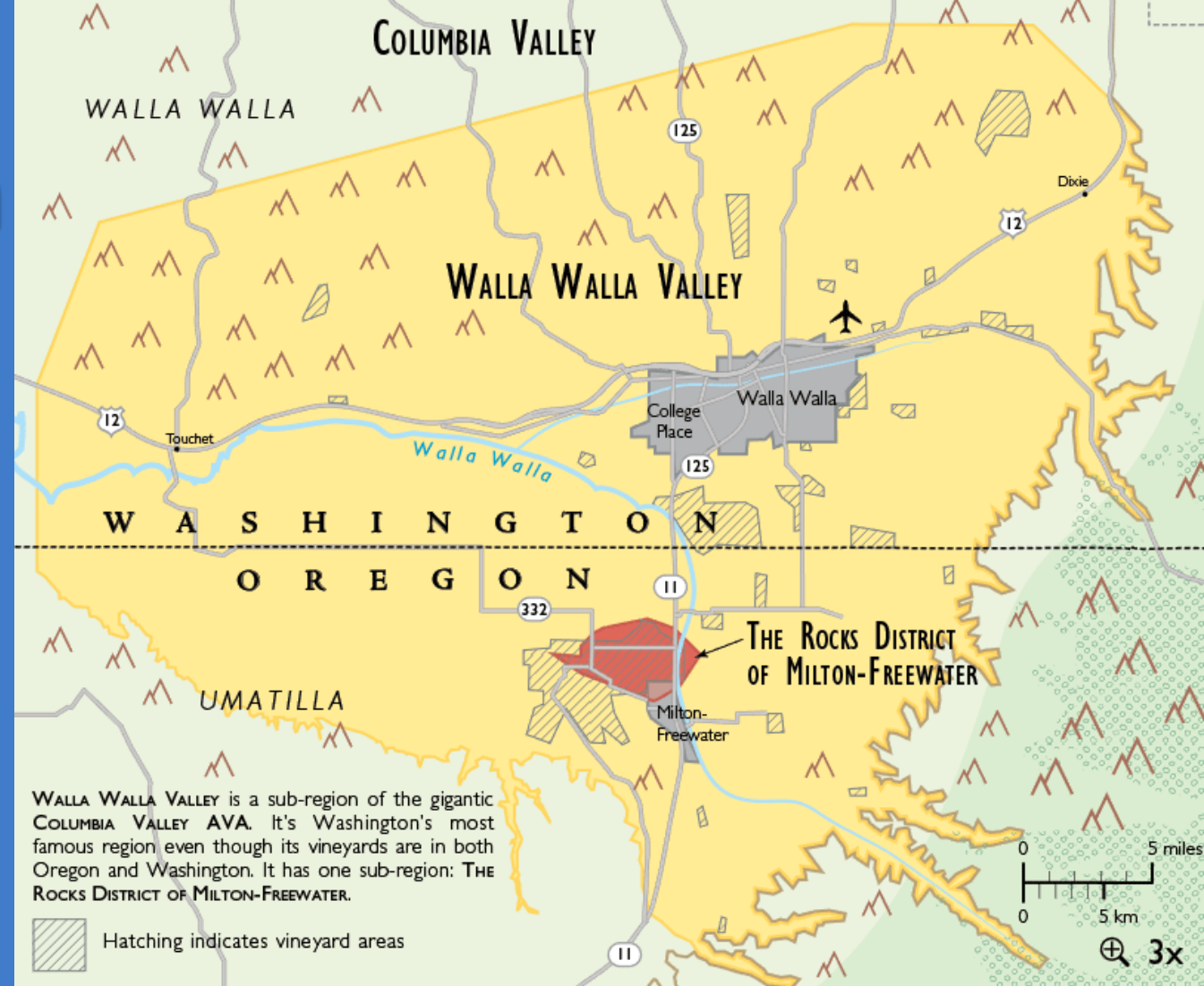
- Washington (and Oregon)



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Geography of Syrah

- Washington (and Oregon)
 - Walla Walla Valley



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Geography of Syrah

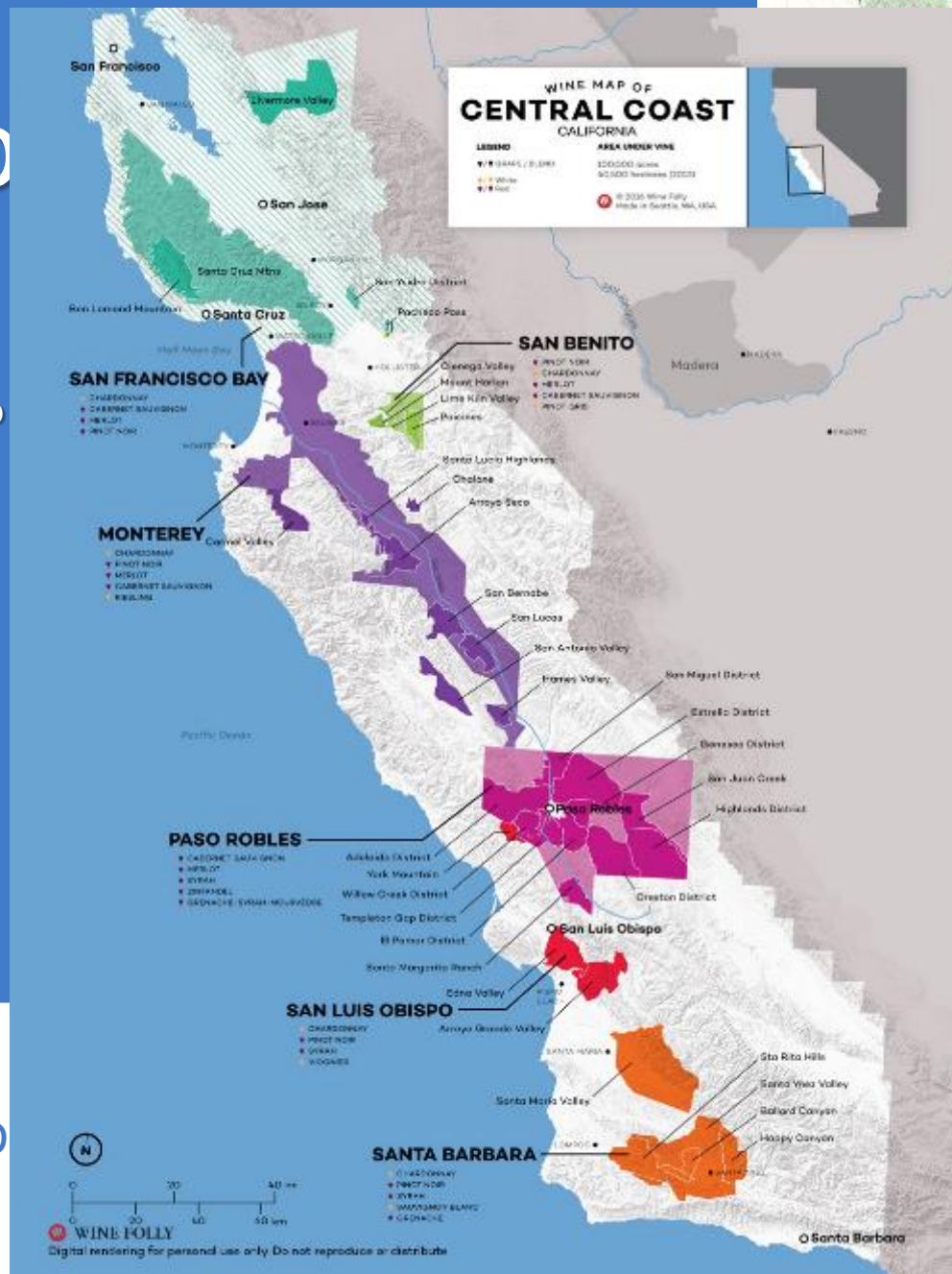
- Washington (and Oregon)
 - Walla Walla Valley
 - Red Mountain
 - Horse Heaven Hills
 - Wahluke Slope



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Geography of

- California
 - Paso Robles (San Luis Obispo)
 - Sonoma



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Biology of Syrah

- Syrah is a very vigorous variety.
- Spreading growth habit and a tendency to produce long, trailing shoots.
- Growth can be excessive on deep, fertile soils and with high-vigor rootstocks.
- Well-adapted to a wide range of viticultural temperature regions, winery uses, and wine styles.
- Mid ripening with a short ripening period between veraison and harvest, plus a short window for optimum harvesting.
- Susceptible to a disease of unknown cause described variously as Syrah/Shiraz disease/decline/disorder and found in many parts of the world, where leaves turn red, swelling and cracks appear at the graft point and vines eventually die (some clones appear more susceptible than others).



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Biology of Syrah

- Dark color, medium tannin, medium plus acidity
- Aromas/Flavors:
 - FRUIT: Blackberry, Blueberry, Boysenberry and Cherry (cooler climate)
 - FLORAL: violet, lavender, mint
 - SAVORY: Cured meat, bacon fat, Olive, and smoke
 - SPICE: white pepper, clove, licorice, rosemary, tobacco
- Syrah vs Shiraz: tends to be a stylistic Old/New world choice
 - Syrah: Olive, Bacon fat, Cherry, blackberry, white pepper, acidic
 - Shiraz: Blackberry, Blueberry, Cassis, Licorice, Chocolate



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Quiz

<http://www.decanter.com/learn/winequiz/syrahshiraz-quiz-test-knowledge-306254/>

Tasting Benchmark Syrah

15 minute break...

Benchmark Syrah

- 2013 Domaine Jamet **Côte-Rôtie**, France
- 2012 Domaine JL Chave **Hermitage**, France
- 2012 Domaine Alain Voge **Cornas**, France
- 2013 Cayuse "Cailloux Vineyard" **Walla Walla Valley AVA**, Oregon
- 2014 K Vintners "The Hidden" Northridge Vineyard **Wahluke Slope AVA**, Washington
- 2014 Betz Family Winery "La Côte Patriarche" Red Willow Vineyard **Yakima Valley AVA** Washington
- 2011 Saxum Bone Rock **Paso Robles AVA**, California
- 2012 Alban Vineyards Reva Syrah **Edna Valley AVA**, California
- 2012 Elderton "Command" **Barossa Valley**, Australia



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2013 Domaine Jamet **Côte-Rôtie**, France
- \$170
- 13% abv
- 100% Syrah
- “Still not in bottle, the 2013 Côte Rôtie was more tight and reserved on this occasion than during my tastings last year. Nevertheless, it still offers terrific depth and concentration, as well a plenty of tannic grip. Offering classic notes of violets, blackberries, raspberries, cured meats and pepper, it has a certain austerity and will be one to hide in the cellar for a good 6-7 years.” - **94 points** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate Jeb Dunnuck



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2012 JL Chave **Hermitage**, France
- \$300
- 14% abv
- Syrah
- Bessards, L'Hermite, Peleat, Meal, Beaume, Diognieres and Vercandiered lieux-dits.
- The vineyards have a terroir of rocky soils ranging from granite, limestone, schist, clay and sandstone soil.
- Vine ages between 50-85 years old.
- “One of the more charming and forward efforts from Chave, the 2012 Hermitage sports a mostly opaque purple color to go with classic creme de cassis and blackberry fruits intermixed with notions of lead pencil shavings, violets and powdered rocks. Deep, full-bodied and sumptuously textured, with good freshness, this pure, elegant Hermitage shows more and more definition and cut with time in the glass, but never loses it's more fruit forward, charming profile. I suspect it will drink nicely for most of its life.” - **96 points** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2012 Domaine Alain Voge **Cornas**, France
- \$80
- 13% abv
- 100% Syrah
- The Cornas "Les Vieilles Vignes" comes from syrah vineyards, more than 30 years old, on decomposed granite slopes, also called "gore".
- "Similar in style, yet deeper and richer, the 2012 Cornas Les Vieilles Vignes comes from 8-9 different parcels and sees roughly 20 months in 15% new French oak barrels. It's a blockbuster-styled Cornas that doesn't pull any punches in its sexy, ripe and textured personality. Black raspberry, cassis, licorice, ground herbs and sweet oak all emerge from this polished 2012, and while it dishes out plenty of pleasure now due to its wealth of fruit, it will have 10-15 years of longevity." – **95 points** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2013 Cayuse Cailloux Vineyard **Walla Walla Valley AVA**
- \$80
- 13.4% abv
- From the oldest vineyard in the Stones (Christophe calls it The Stones, not The Rocks), the transparent ruby colored 2013 Syrah Cailloux Vineyard incorporates 5% co-fermented Viognier and has a distinct saltiness, as well as classic Cayuse notes of peat moss, mushrooms, iodine, and sweet cherry and currant fruit. While gamey and a touch backwards right on opening, it blossomed with time in the glass and can be enjoyed today with a decant, or cellared for a decade or more. — **94 points** Jeb Dunnuck, *The Wine Advocate*



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Benchmark Syrah

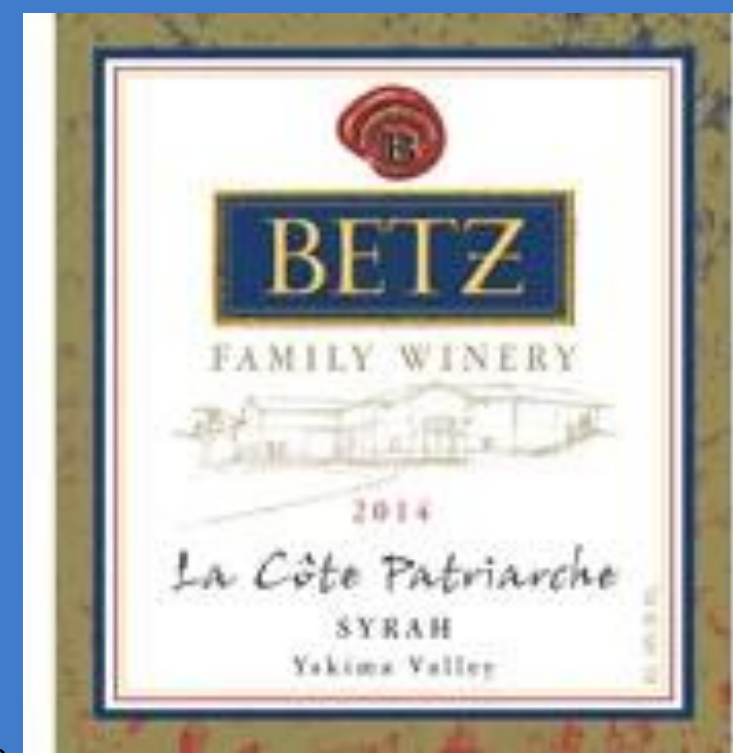
- 2013 K Vintners – “The Hidden” **Wahluke Slope AVA**
- 14.5% abv
- \$70
- 100% Syrah
- “Reminding me of a Northern Rhone Syrah from the Le Meal lieu-dit on Hermitage Hill, the 2013 Syrah The Hidden Northridge Vineyard comes entirely from the Northridge Vineyard on the Wahluke Slope, was fermented with 100% whole clusters and aged in mostly neutral oak. It offers thrilling notes of black raspberries, toasted bread, caramelized meats and licorice in a full-bodied, ultra-pure, supple, incredibly sexy style. Possessing building, fine tannin, it needs a lengthy decant if drinking anytime soon, but this utterly seamless, perfectly balanced beauty will offer upward of two decades of overall longevity.” - **97 Points**, Jeb Dunnuck *Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate*



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2013 Betz Family Winery– “La Côte Patriarche” Red Willow Vineyard
Yakima Valley AVA
- 14% abv
- \$60
- 100% Syrah
- "One of the wines of the vintage is the 2014 La Cote Patriarche, and it's the finest vintage of this cuvee ever made. All from the Red Willow vineyard and some of the oldest Syrah vines in the state, this incredible Syrah yields a layered, awesomely pure bouquet of black and blue fruits, violets, herbes de Provence and graphite, with cool climate notes of olives and violets emerging with time in the glass. Big, rich, layered and more sexy and seamless than the Cote Rousse, it needs 3-4 years of cellaring and will keep through 2034."-
98 Points, Jeb Dunnuck *Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2011 Saxum Vineyards – “Bone Rock” James Berry Vineyard **Paso Robles AVA**
- 15.3% abv
- \$89
- Syrah with Roussanne and Mourvèdre
- “Decidedly cool climate in character, the 2011 James Berry Vineyard Bone Rock comes from steep, terraced plots of old head trained Syrah vines that, in 2011, wasn’t harvested until November. Co-fermented with a splash of Roussanne and Mourvedre, it’s a spectacular effort that makes the most of the cool, long growing season. It’s also the most long term prospect in the lineup. Offering up a tight, Cornas-like bouquet of black and blue fruits, white pepper, spring flowers and salty minerality, it is full-bodied, beautifully concentrated and seamless on the palate, with ultra-fine tannin and building richness that only starts to develop with a healthy decant. It’s a gorgeous wine, yet needs to be forgotten for at least 4-5 years. It should drink nicely through 2031. .” – **98+ Points**, Jeb Dunnuck *Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate*



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2012 Alban Vineyards – “Reva” **Edna Valley AVA**
- 15.8% abv
- \$98
- 100% Syrah
- “There are 750 cases (which means good yields for John, although any normal person would call 1.5-1.75 tons per acre financial suicide) of the 2012 Syrah Reva Alban Estate Vineyard, and it's a terrific vintage for this cuvee. Elegant, pretty, even finesse driven, with its classic marine and salty bouquet of smoke, purple fruits, olives and violets, this full-bodied Syrah has no hard edges, integrated acidity and a great finish. It's reasonably approachable now, but deserves 2-4 years of cellaring.” - **97 Points**, Jeb Dunnock *Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*



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Benchmark Syrah

- 2012 Elderton – “Command” **Barossa**
- 14.5% abv
- \$90
- 100% Syrah
- Vine Age: Planted circa 1894, classed as a centenarian block by the Barossa Old Vine Charter
- Soil: Deep alluvial silt over red and brown earths and limestone
- Rainfall: Long term average - 478.3 mm
- Spacing: Vine spacing 1.5m, row width 3m. East to West row direction
- Yields: 1-2 tonnes per hectare



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Blind Comparative Tasting

15 minute break...

Blind Comparative Tasting

Guesses on the wines...

1. E. Guigal 2012 **Crozes-Hermitage**, 13%, \$23
2. Boulder Creek Winery 2012 Syrah **Colorado**, 14.4%, \$23
3. Yellowtail 2013 Reserve Shiraz **South Eastern Australia**, 14%, \$10
4. Whitewater Hill Vineyards 2014 Shiraz **Grand Valley AVA**, 13.6%, \$19
5. Bookcliff Vineyards 2014 Syrah **Colorado**, 14.6%, \$19
6. Bedrock Wine Co. 2015 Syrah **North Coast AVA**, 14.5%, \$19

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Thank you very much!!



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