

**Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard****2004 Durif, McDowell Valley Vineyard  
(McDowell Valley)**

Jeff Emery has been bottling Durif since way back in the pre-wine boom days of 1977. Most people back then had no idea what it was, just as now. The variety known as Durif in France is known as Petite Sirah in California. Named for Dr. Durif, who propagated it from a cross between Peloursin and

Syrah in 1880, the variety seemed to fare somewhat better in cool and wet climates than either parent varietal.

This 2004 Mendocino Durif from McDowell Valley Vineyard, is from vines planted in 1948 in a valley in southern Mendocino County, one valley over from Hwy 101 just west of Hopland. Genetics have been done on this vineyard confirming that it is indeed Durif, and possibly one of the oldest plantings in California. Jeff insists on using the "correct" name for this grape, eschewing the appearance of "Petite Sirah" on his label.

Jeff believes the grapes came in about 24.2° Brix. Typical of Mendocino fruit, the pH is relatively high compared to fruit grown in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Jeff recalls it was probably around 3.7 before fermentation with a corresponding TA of around 0.55.

This is a most gorgeous wine to stare at: deeply pigmented and reeking of classy richness. The aromas are quintessential blackberry and blueberry pie, with hints of tar and pepper. Flavors are overwhelming big, fat berry-dripping blueberry pie and jam, bubbling over with cinnamon and allspice: the acid is terrific. This is an intense, nicely tannic and plushly textured wine that finishes clean and lean. A fantastic effort that you'll fall in love with instantly. 255 cases produced.

Reviewed March 28, 2008 by [Laura Ness](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard](#)

**Vineyard:** McDowell Valley Vineyard

**Vintage:** 2004

**Wine:** Durif

**Appellation:** [McDowell Valley](#)

**Grape:** [Petite Sirah](#)

**Price:** \$18.00

**THE REVIEWER****Laura Ness**

A wine writer and wine judge for major publications and competitions around the country, Laura Ness likens wine to the experience of music. She is always looking for that ubiquitous marriage of rhythm, melody, and flawless execution. What is good music? You

know it when you get lost in it. What is good wine? It is music in your mouth.