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|--------------|------|-------------------------------|-------|----|
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Picpoul | White | 91 |
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Viognier | White | 91 |
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc | White | 94 |
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Côtes de Tablas | Red | 90 |
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Mourvèdre | Red | 89 |
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Syrah | Red | 91 |
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Esprit de Beaucastel | Red | 94 |
| Tablas Creek | 2005 | Esprit de Beaucastel Panoplie | Red | 97 |

“During my tasting in the Central Coast in 2015, I was able to taste through a 2005 horizontal retrospective from Tablas Creek. While I expected the top cuvées to age gracefully (I own, cellar and drink many of them), I was incredibly impressed by this team’s entry-level releases (and their whites!) and their ability to evolve gracefully for upwards of a decade. These are fabulous wines that will certainly stand up to the best coming out of the Rhône Valley in France.

One of the shockers of the retrospective was the **2005 Picpoul**, and I would never have guessed this variety could evolve as well as this bottle. Still lively in color, it offers beautiful waxy, lemony notes with buttered citrus, flower oil and hints of honeysuckle. Still fresh, pure and vibrant on the palate, with medium-bodied richness, it’s a terrific, exotic white that will shine on the dinner table. I imagine it will continue evolving gracefully as well. Drink: 2015-2018.

Another white aging better than I would ever have guessed is the **2005 Viognier**, which offers lots of exotic flowers, honey and hints of mint in a full-bodied, rich, fleshy and textured style on the palate. This beauty has aged every bit as nicely as a top Condrieu, and has terrific freshness and purity while not sacrificing the inherent texture and richness that are the hallmarks of the variety. Drink: 2015-2019.

I’ve always believed in the ageability of this cuvée and it’s great to see that demonstrated time and time again. The **2005 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc** is another full-bodied white from the Tables Creek team that has texture and richness, while staying fresh, lively and pure. Notes of buttered citrus, crushed rocks, lemon oil, juniper and flower oil all emerge from this beautiful white that will continue to evolve gracefully for another 5-10 years. Drink: 2015-2020.

Made from 43% Grenache, 24% Mourvèdre, 18% Syrah and 15% Counoise, the entry-level **Côtes de Tablas** is another wine that will have me opening up the drink window on the cuvee going forward. Aging like a classic southern Rhône with its kirsch, raspberry, spice and dried flower-laced aromas and flavors, this medium to full-bodied beauty is elegant, supple and drinking at point. It should continue offering plenty of pleasure over the coming couple of years, and probably beyond that. It’s worth noting that this bottle was closed via cork. I was able to

taste the same cuvee from a screw cap closure, and while it was more fresh, it lacked the breadth on the palate and the complexity of the cork-closed bottle. Drink: 2015-2018.

The **2005 Mourvèdre** (there is 10% Syrah in the blend) is drinking at point, with classic underbrush, game, olive, forest floor and darker fruits in its medium-bodied, layered and balanced personality. It should hold nicely going forward, but there’s no need to hold off. Drink: 2015-2018.

The still vibrant ruby-colored **2005 Syrah** is reminiscent of beautiful northern Rhône Syrah and offers a meaty, black olive, smoked herb and black fruit-driven personality. Medium to full-bodied, balanced and layered, it has nicely integrated acidity, plenty of fruit and a solid finish. It should continue drinking beautifully through 2022. Drink 2015-2022.

The **2005 Esprit de Beaucastel** continues to drink brilliantly and offers more than a passing resemblance to a top Châteauneuf du Pape from the south of France. Medium to full-bodied, elegant and layered, it has lots of Provençal herbs, dried flowers, leather and hints of olive, as well as ample fruit in its charming, balanced and complex personality. It’s fully mature, but will cruise for another 4-6 years, and certainly, keep even longer. Drink: 2015-2022.

The top cuvée is the Mourvèdre-dominated **2005 Esprit de Beaucastel Panoplie**, which incorporates 25% Grenache and 5% Syrah, and is raised mostly in foudre. It’s a richer, broader, more meaty and textured example of the Esprit cuvée, and gives up terrific aromatics of smoked meats, roasted herbs, black cherries, currants and earth. Possessing awesome purity, as well as elegance, it’s drinking at point today, but has another decade or more of life. Drink: 2015-2025.”