

# TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



*The VINformer*  
*Winter 2016-2017*



*The Tablas Creek crew celebrates the last bin of harvest.*

## 2016 Harvest Report: Fast, Furious and Early

After a flurry of activity in early October, the 2016 harvest finished nearly three weeks earlier than normal. The final week saw 72.8 tons from a whopping six different grapes: Grenache, Tannat, Cunoise, Mourvèdre, Roussanne, and our small block of Cabernet. And not just one pick of each. We saw six different Mourvèdre picks, five Grenache picks, and two picks each for Cunoise and Roussanne. This is not usually how things sequence out; in a normal year, we'd expect the last week to be dedicated to Mourvèdre and Roussanne, while the other grapes are done.

See **HARVEST**, page 6

## Tablas Creek Wins Green Medal for Sustainability

We are proud to announce that the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance awarded Tablas Creek one of four 2016 Green Medals for leadership in sustainability. For the full story, see page 3.



## Steady Progress in Direct Shipping

*by Jason Haas*

2016 has seen a flurry of progress in direct shipping of wine, with bills signed in three important states that had until now prohibited us from shipping to consumers. We have received our shipping permits for Pennsylvania and Indiana; Arizona will start issuing permits in early 2017.

Because the 21st Amendment, which repealed Prohibition, gives states wide leeway to shape their laws governing alcohol, progress has come in fits and starts. But after a decade of steady progress, we can now ship to 38 states, which together encompass 85% of the US population.

Direct shipping laws give consumers access to thousands of wineries, nearly all of them small, and tens of thousands of wines with productions too small to make it into distribution. They also bring tax revenue into state budgets and open markets for local wineries. Each year, a few new states open debates on direct shipping, and consumer voices really can make a difference. We encourage you to get involved by visiting [www.freethegrapes.org](http://www.freethegrapes.org).

Remember that while we are working to increase the number of states to which we ship (and open for our wine club), we also have distribution in all 50 states. Wherever you live, we're happy to connect you with local retailers or wholesalers who carry our wine. Contact us at [findwine@tablascreek.com](mailto:findwine@tablascreek.com).



*Green represents states we can ship to, red the states we cannot, and yellow the states where shipping is imminent.*

# Focus Varietal: Roussanne

**R**oussanne, with its honeyed richness and excellent longevity, forms the backbone of our *Esprit de Tablas Blanc*. In addition, it has the balance and character to make a compelling single varietal wine, as in our varietal *Roussanne* that we've made each year since 2001. The varietal takes its name from "roux", the French word for "russet" – an apt description of the grapes' reddish gold skins at harvest.

## *Roussanne in France*

It seems likely Roussanne is native to the Rhône Valley. The varietal has not ventured far from its origin; most of the world's Roussanne is still found in the Rhône. In the Southern Rhône, Roussanne is one of six white grape varieties permitted in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and it is often blended with Grenache Blanc. In the Northern Rhône, Roussanne is frequently blended with Marsanne in the appellations of Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage, and Saint Joseph.

Roussanne is also found in the Savoie region of France (where it is known as Bergeron), and in limited quantities in Australia and Italy. In the United States, Roussanne is most planted in the Central Coast, but can also be found in Sonoma, Napa and the Sierra Foothills regions of California, as well as in the Yakima Valley of Washington State.

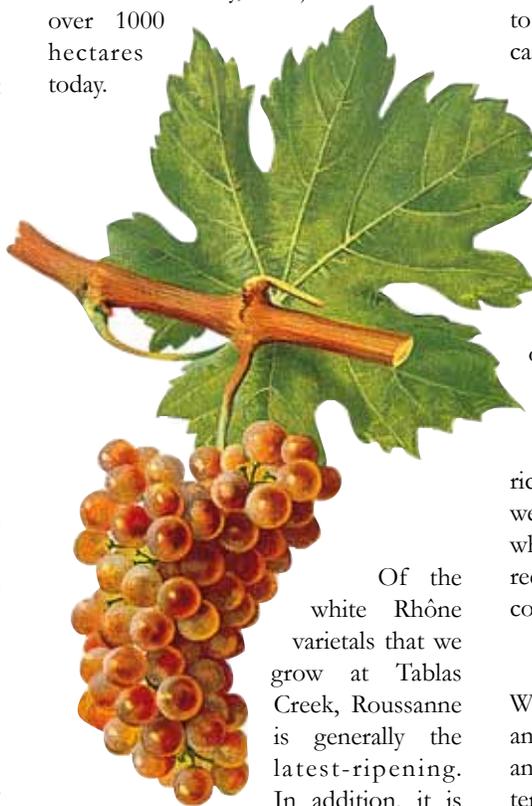
## *Roussanne in California*

After some early, largely unsuccessful experiments with Roussanne (the last of which were pulled out in the 1920s) early Rhone Rangers reintroduced Roussanne into the United States in the 1980s. Cuttings from the Rhône Valley were propagated and planted in vineyards around California, and many wines from those cuttings garnered critical acclaim. Years later, DNA tests identified those vines as Viognier – a discovery which led to years of controversy. We ensured the authenticity of our clones by importing vine cuttings

from Château de Beaucastel. Most of the 347 acres of Roussanne planted as of 2015 in California are descendants of the clones brought in by Tablas Creek.

## *Roussanne in the Vineyard*

Roussanne has a well-deserved reputation as a difficult varietal to grow. In its native France, plantings had declined to just 54 hectares in the late 1960s before rebounding towards the end of the twentieth century, to just over 1000 hectares today.



prone to shutting down toward the end of harvest, as well as to

Of the white Rhône varieties that we grow at Tablas Creek, Roussanne is generally the latest-ripening. In addition, it is

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***Wines made from Roussanne are rich and complex, with distinct honey, floral and apricot flavors.***

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shatter and uneven yields. The vines are very responsive to sunlight, and grape bunches on the western side of the vine tend to ripen more quickly than bunches on the eastern side. To combat this tendency, we harvest the grapes in multiple passes. Sixteen acres of our vineyard are devoted to Roussanne, representing

about half of our white acreage and 5% of the Roussanne planted in California.

## *Roussanne in the Cellar*

In contrast to the challenge it presents in the vineyard, Roussanne is flexible and forgiving in the cellar. It can be successfully fermented in large or small oak, or in stainless steel. It can be harvested at lower sugars but still have good body, or can be left to greater ripeness without losing all its acidity. It has the body to take to new oak, or stainless steel can emphasize its minerality. And unlike most white wines, Roussanne ages very well due to its unusual combination of richness and minerality; many Roussanne wines can be enjoyed up to 15 years or more after bottling.

At Tablas Creek, we ferment most of our Roussanne in oak barrels of various sizes, including the same 1200-gallon foudres in which we age our red wines. The oak provides a structured richness and enhances the rich texture of the grape. Since 2012, we have also aged our Roussanne-based whites in foudre for 18 months, like a red, to allow them to flesh out into their considerable structure.

## *Flavors and Aromas*

Wines made from Roussanne are rich and complex, with distinct honey, floral and apricot flavors. They have a characteristic oily texture and a full body that is more reminiscent of red wines than whites. Our varietal *Roussanne* showcases wine lots with particularly intense varietal character. Roussanne also forms the core of our signature *Esprit de Tablas Blanc*, adds structure and acids to our Viognier-based *Côtes de Tablas Blanc*, and makes a delicious base to our *Vin de Paille* dessert wines. 🍇

## Tablas Creek Wins Major Sustainability Award



We are proud to announce that the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance awarded Tablas Creek one of four 2016 Green Medals for leadership in sustainability. The award is part of a program created to recognize wineries who are making grape growing and winemaking more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable. The award recognizes wineries in three categories, for their innovations in bringing greater sustainability to their environment, their community involvement, and their business practices. Our award specifically called out our community

involvement but also recognized innovations in sustainable practices in areas such as water use, soil and nutrition management, pest management, biodiversity and wildlife conservation, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas mitigation, human resources, and solid waste management. For details on our sustainability efforts, visit [tablascreek.com/sustainability](http://tablascreek.com/sustainability)

### Rhône River Cruise with Tablas Creek July 2-9, 2017



We're excited to be returning to the Mediterranean in the summer of 2017 to host a Rhône River cruise aboard the wonderful Uniworld ship S.S. Catherine. Partner Jason Haas, with his wife Meghan, and Executive Winemaker Neil Collins, with his wife Marci, will host this 8-day cruise from Avignon to Lyon, including visits to Tarascon, Viviers, Tain L'Hermitage, and Macon.

At each stop, there will be daily shore tours, including behind-the-scenes visits to Château de Beaucastel and the Perrins' new properties in Gigondas, with a gourmet lunch prepared by Beaucastel's Michelin-starred chef Laurent Deconick.

We have reserved the entire ship for our group at a special rate, but only until January 31, 2017 when prices will go up (if there are any cabins left). Cabins start at \$4153 per person. For all the details, and to book, call Food & Wine Trails at (800) 367-5348 or visit our travel partners' Web site at [foodandwinetrails.com/tablascreek2017](http://foodandwinetrails.com/tablascreek2017). We hope that you will join us! 🍷

## On the Blog: Eat Drink Tablas

A year ago we debuted a food and wine pairing series on the Tablas Creek blog called Eat Drink Tablas. It's written by Suphada Rom, who uses her background in the restaurant industry to provide mouth watering recipes expertly paired with Tablas Creek wines. A new entry is posted each month, and the most recent one provides four original recipes specially chosen to complement the four wines in the Dinner Party Gift package (see page 4). Recipes include Crab and Avocado Salad paired with the 2015 *Côtes Blanc*, Pomegranate Glazed Pork Belly paired with 2014 *Connoisse*, Garlic and Herb Crusted Rack of Lamb paired with 2011 *Esprit*, and Chocolate Truffles paired with 2014 *Sacrerouge*.



For those recipes, and the rest of the mouth-watering columns, visit [tablascreek.com/EatDrinkTablas](http://tablascreek.com/EatDrinkTablas)

### December is must! Month

Once again, Tablas Creek will donate \$1 to must! charities for each bottle purchased directly from us (in our tasting room, online or by phone) during the month of December. We invite you to visit us through the end of the year to enjoy Tablas Creek wines, check out our new holiday gift packs, and support local children in need. 100% of the funds generated will go directly to ensure kids in our community have access to healthy food. For more information about the great work must! is doing, visit [must-charities.org](http://must-charities.org) 🍷

## 2016 HOLIDAY GIFT PACKS

### SHIPPING INCLUDED



At Tablas Creek, we want to help you celebrate in style! We have several ways in which you can give the gift of Tablas Creek, including five special holiday gift packs. We are including shipping, and a special decorative gift box, at no extra charge to any address in any of the 38 states we can ship to. For gift orders, we are happy to enclose a holiday message. These special holiday packs will only be available for pickup or shipment until the end of December. To order, visit [tablascreek.com](http://tablascreek.com) or call 805.237.1231.

#### **Esprit de Tablas Gift Pack** (2 bottles)

A bottle each of the newest vintage of our signature wines:

- 2014 *Esprit de Tablas*
- 2014 *Esprit de Tablas Blanc*

\$100 per pack, and \$80 per pack for VINsiders.

#### **Library Vertical of Esprit Gift Pack** (3 bottles)

A bottle each of three vintages of our flagship red wine:

- 2009 *Esprit de Beaucastel*
- 2010 *Esprit de Beaucastel*
- 2011 *Esprit de Tablas*

\$195 per pack, and \$156 per pack for VINsiders.

#### **White Blending Component Gift Pack** (3 bottles)

A bottle each of the two primary components of our signature white wine, plus the *Esprit Blanc* itself:

- 2015 *Grenache Blanc*
- 2014 *Roussanne*
- 2014 *Esprit de Tablas Blanc*

\$110 per pack, and \$88 per pack for VINsiders.

#### **Unusual Varietals Gift Pack** (4 bottles)

A bottle each of four limited production wines, all difficult or impossible to find in distribution:

- 2015 *Grenache Blanc*
- 2014 *Marsanne*
- 2014 *Tannat*
- 2014 *Mourvèdre*

\$140 per pack, and \$112 per pack for VINsiders.

#### **Dinner Party Gift Pack** (4 bottles)

A bottle for each of four courses, perfect for holiday entertaining. Suggested recipes for pairing are included.

- 2015 *Côtes de Tablas Blanc*
- 2014 *Connoisse*
- 2011 *Esprit de Tablas*
- 2014 *Vin de Paille Sacrerouge*

\$190 per pack, and \$152 per pack for VINsiders.

#### **Reserve Tasting Certificates**

Our Reserve Tasting offers guests an intimate tasting of our most exclusive wines as well as selections from our library. Give the gift of a reserve tasting at Tablas Creek, and the gift recipient will enjoy a seated tasting in our private room, with rare wines we've aged in our cellars since their release. Space is limited to 8 seats per session, and reservations are available Sunday-Friday at 11:30am and 3pm and Saturdays at 10am. Certificates are available for \$40 per person (\$25 for club members). To purchase, find the "reserve tasting certificates" section at the bottom of our online order form or call 805.237.1231 x39.



# TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



# WINE ORDER FORM WINTER 2016 -2017

## DISCOUNTS

VINsiders members receive a discount of 25% on orders of 12 bottles or more and 20% on orders of fewer than 12 bottles. VINdependents receive a discount of 20% on orders of a case or more and 10% on orders of fewer than 12 bottles. Non-Club members receive a 10% discount on orders of 12 bottles or more.

## SHIPPING

Shipping included on orders that include 6 or more bottles of *Esprit* and/or *Esprit Blanc*.

### CA\*

1-2 bottles: \$10.00  
3- 6 bottles: \$20.00  
7-12 bottles: \$30.00

### CO, ID\*,MT, NM, NV\*,OR, WA\*,WY

1-2 bottles: \$15.00  
3-6 bottles: \$30.00  
7-12 bottles: \$40.00

### AK, DC, FL, GA\*,HI, IA, IL, IN, KS\*, MA, MD\*, ME\*, MI\*, MN, MO, NC\*, ND, NE\*, NH\*, NY\*, OH\*, PA, SC\*, TN\*, TX\*, VA\*, VT\*, WI, WV\*

1-2 bottles: \$20.00  
3- 6 bottles: \$35.00  
7-12 bottles: \$45.00

\*State and local taxes apply

## LEGAL

Due to federal and state laws, we are permitted to ship to addresses in the above states only. Wines may only be shipped to and received by adults at least 21 years of age. **An adult signature is required at delivery**

WINE	QUANTITY	LIST PRICE	VINDEPENDENT PRICE	VINSIDER PRICE	TOTAL
<b>SPECIAL PACKAGES [SHIPPING INCLUDED; DETAILS ON P. 4]</b>					
ESPRIT DE TABLAS GIFT PACK (2 bottles)	_____	\$100.00	\$90.00	\$80.00	_____
LIBRARY VERTICAL GIFT PACK(3 bottles)	_____	\$195.00	\$175.50	\$156.00	_____
WHITE BLENDING GIFT PACK (3 bottles)	_____	\$110.00	\$99.00	\$88.00	_____
UNUSUAL VARIETAL GIFT PACK (4 bottles)	_____	\$140.00	\$126.00	\$112.00	_____
DINNER PARTY GIFT PACK (4 bottles)	_____	\$190.00	\$171.00	\$152.00	_____

## WHITE WINES

ESPRIT DE TABLAS BLANC 2014	_____	\$45.00	\$40.50	\$36.00	_____
CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC 2015	_____	\$30.00	\$27.00	\$24.00	_____
PATELIN DE TABLAS BLANC 2015	_____	\$25.00	\$22.50	\$20.00	_____
GRENACHE BLANC 2015	_____	\$30.00	\$27.00	\$24.00	_____
MARSANNE 2015	_____	\$30.00	\$27.00	\$24.00	_____

## RED WINES

ESPRIT DE TABLAS 2014	_____	\$55.00	\$49.50	\$44.00	_____
CÔTES DE TABLAS 2014	_____	\$35.00	\$31.50	\$28.00	_____
PATELIN DE TABLAS 2014	_____	\$25.00	\$22.50	\$20.00	_____
MOURVÈDRE 2014	_____	\$40.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	_____
FULL CIRCLE PINOT NOIR 2014	_____	\$45.00	\$40.50	\$36.00	_____
SYRAH 2013	_____	\$40.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	_____
ESPRIT DE TABLAS 2013	_____	\$55.00	\$49.50	\$44.00	_____

SUBTOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

CASE DISCOUNT (IF APPLICABLE) \_\_\_\_\_

STATE AND LOCAL TAXES WILL BE APPLIED

SHIPPING \_\_\_\_\_

ORDER TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I am 21 years or older.

## BILLING & SHIPMENT: EITHER

VINsider Name: \_\_\_\_\_

VINsider Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Bill to my credit card on file  Ship to my address on file

## OR

### BILL TO:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### SHIP TO:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### CREDIT CARD:

MC/Visa/AmEx #: \_\_\_\_\_

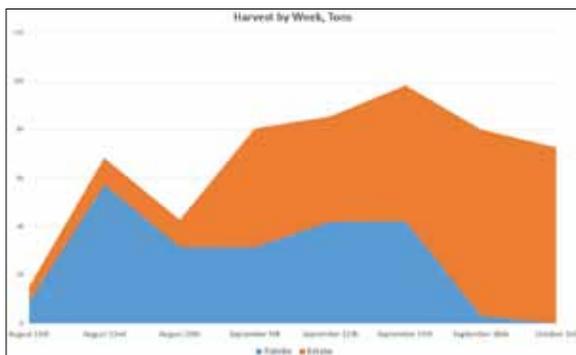
Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**To order:** return form to Tablas Creek Vineyard, 9339 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446 or fax 805.237.1314 :: email [orders@tablascreek.com](mailto:orders@tablascreek.com) :: order online at [www.tablascreek.com](http://www.tablascreek.com)

All this happened in near-record time. At just 51 days between its August 18th beginning and its October 8th conclusion, this harvest clocked in at nearly a week shorter than average. The beginning was our earliest-ever, about two weeks earlier than normal, and the end our third-earliest.



The compressed and overlapping picks were characteristic of 2016's harvest. Because we plan to use each of our fermentation tanks and casks as many as six times each harvest, the shorter the total duration of the harvest, the more pressure we have on our available space. In the end, we managed to make it all fit, and were very happy with the quality we saw. But it didn't follow a normal bell curve distribution, with a slow beginning and end. Instead, after a modest start, we stayed busy, with at least 70 tons coming in all of the last five weeks.

Yields were much better than 2015, with increases particularly noteworthy in early-ripening grape varieties like Viognier, Vermentino, Grenache and Syrah, all up 70% or more. (Of course, all were down 40%-70% in 2015). Later varieties were up too, though less, with Roussanne up 11.9% and Mourvèdre up 32%. Overall yields ended up at 2.97 tons per acre, right at

our ten-year average. Those crop levels seem to bring a balance of intensity and elegance that make the blending a pleasure in the spring.

2016's average sugars were our lowest-ever at harvest. At the same time, we saw higher average pH levels than we have in the last decade, particularly in grapes like Roussanne and Mourvèdre. This may be due to the ongoing drought, as well as the impact of the warm weather starting mid-September. Overall, it was a warm year, just slightly cooler than 2014, our warmest-ever year.

We picked even more lots this year (114) than last, when we ran out of space on our harvest chalkboard. This too was necessitated by the drought; we wanted to get the fruit off the healthiest vines while they had good acids, while letting the clusters that were ripening more slowly continue to accumulate sugar, even at the price of lower acids.

In character, it's early to tell what things will be like, but two things give us good hopes for its prospects. First is the overall similarity in sequencing, weather, and yields to 2014, which we consider our best recent vintage overall. Second is the deep colors and intense aromas of what we've been harvesting. Skins on our red grapes have been very thick. Flavors should be intense.

The final project of harvest 2016 was to make our first Roussanne *Vin de Paille* since 2012. This traditional dessert wine-making technique involves drying newly-harvested clusters on straw, and only pressing and beginning fermentation after they reached our desired level of concentration -- typically around 35°-40° Brix. This year, the drying process took three weeks.



*Roussanne grapes drying on straw for the Vin de Paille dessert wine.*



**Happy Holidays**

from Sebastian (9) and Eli (11) Haas  
and all of us at Tablas Creek!

## Meet the Tablas Creek Team! Questions for David Maduena, Vineyard Manager

David has worked at Tablas Creek for 24 years, and is the longest tenured member of our team. He began as part of the first crews establishing the nursery and vineyard programs, and has served as Vineyard Manager since 2007.

### Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Durango City, Mexico and lived there until I came to Paso Robles when I was 15 years old, where I lived with my parents and siblings.

### Tell me about how you started working at Tablas Creek.

I started working in the local vineyards all around the area -- a week or two here and there. I helped plant and add irrigation lines to Mount Mourvèdre at Tablas Creek in 1992. I began working permanently here in 1993 when we started building the Quonset huts and expanded the nursery project.

### What is your general vineyard management philosophy?

I always look to do the best for the vineyard. I deal with a lot of different things in the vineyard from gopher control to managing a crew of between 7 and 30 people, and I just try to keep everything in control.

### What do you think about organic farming?

I think organic is good, it helps to not put a lot of chemicals in the soil- everything is natural so you're not killing the soil, you're helping it. And it's better for the crew, they don't have to wear special protective gear to keep them safe.

### What's your biggest challenge as a Vineyard Manager?

Taking care of everything out there. I have to deal with a lot of different people and it's not easy to find a good way to talk to the crew. Some supervisors are mean to the workers but that's not good for them and not good for us.



### How do you spend your days off?

I like to play soccer or basketball with my kids. I have 7 kids and they are always playing something. I spend most of my time off with my family.

### How do you define success?

Success to me is to make progress in life. You start from the bottom, like I did. I was just a normal worker, now I've been here so many years that they trust me and made me a Vineyard Manager and now I have more responsibility and take care of the whole place. I think that is success.

## Upcoming Events

**December 3, 2016**

### ***En Primeur* Tasting and Futures Offering**

Wine Club members are invited to join Tablas Creek winemakers for the fourteenth annual barrel tasting and sale *en primeur* of Tablas Creek's remarkable red wines from the outstanding, scarce 2015 vintage. Offering wine *en primeur* is a time-honored French tradition most often associated with first-growth Bordeaux estates. In outstanding vintages, valued customers are offered the opportunity to secure a limited quantities of sought-after wines at a special price in advance of bottling and subsequent general release. Wine Club members should have received an invitation and reservation form in early November.

**February 19, 2017**

### **Paso Robles Rhône Rangers Experience**

Tablas Creek will join the 50 members of the Paso Robles Chapter of the Rhône Rangers for the 2017 Paso Robles Rhône Rangers Experience. This fun-filled and information-rich day will include a "Rhône Essentials" seminar moderated by Elaine Chukan Brown, renowned wine journalist, a Vintners' Lunch, and the Grand Tasting and Silent Auction. The day's events will take place at Broken Earth Winery. Tickets for the seminar and lunch are \$90, and seminar/lunch attendees will receive free entry into the Grand Tasting. Tickets for the Grand Tasting are \$35. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [rhonerangers.org](http://rhonerangers.org).

**February 11, 2017**

### **2007 Horizontal Tasting**

**1:00 PM**

In 2014 we began an annual tradition of looking back with a decade's perspective at how a broad range of wines have developed. In February, we will turn our attention on the 2007 vintage. At this horizontal tasting (horizontal referring to tasting several wines from a single estate made in a single year, as opposed to vertical, which would imply a tasting of the same wine across several vintages), you can join us as we look back at 2007 with the perspective of ten years' time. The cost is \$45 for wine club members and \$60 for guests and non-members. This event is sure to fill up early. To reserve, email [events@tablascreek.com](mailto:events@tablascreek.com)

**April 22, 2017**

### **Blending Seminar**

**10:00 AM**

Join us for our annual blending seminar! Winemaker Neil Collins will lead a barrel tasting of the individual varietals and a discussion of our blending process, and then set you loose with graduated cylinders to produce your own blend. This event is extremely popular and sells out quickly. The cost is \$45 for wine club members and \$60 for guests. Space is limited and reservations are required; contact us at [events@tablascreek.com](mailto:events@tablascreek.com) or 805.237.1231 x30.

## Tablas on Tour: National Events

### February 25, 2017

Festival Mozaic Notable Encounter  
Edna Valley, California  
[www.festivalmozaic.com](http://www.festivalmozaic.com)

### March 5, 2017

Family Winemakers of California Tasting  
Del Mar Fairgrounds  
San Diego, California  
[www.familywinemakers.org](http://www.familywinemakers.org)

### March 17-19, 2017

Vintage Paso: Zinfandel and Other Wild Wines  
Paso Robles, California  
[www.pasowine.com](http://www.pasowine.com)  
805.239.8463

### March 31-April 3, 2016

Pebble Beach Food and Wine Festival  
Pebble Beach, California  
[www.pbfw.com](http://www.pbfw.com)  
866.907.3663

### April 5-9, 2017

Taste of Vail  
Vail, Colorado  
970.401.3320  
[www.tasteofvail.com](http://www.tasteofvail.com)

### April 23-30, 2017

Berns' Wine Fest  
Tampa, Florida  
[www.bernswinefest.com](http://www.bernswinefest.com)  
813.251.2421

### May 18-21, 2017

Paso Robles Wine Festival  
Paso Robles, California  
[www.pasowine.com](http://www.pasowine.com)  
805.239.8463

### June 10-11, 2017

Rhone Rangers Northern California Tasting  
San Francisco, California  
[www.rhonerangers.org](http://www.rhonerangers.org)  
800.467.0163



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Printed on recycled paper

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