

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



The VINformer
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June 2013

State of the Vineyard

Summer is in full swing here at Tablas Creek! Budbreak began the second week of April, and we are now toward the end of flowering, with even the latest-flowering grapes past the mid-point of the process. Flowering has taken place under largely ideal conditions, with none of the rain, excessive heat, or strong winds that can impact flower fertilization and lead to shatter, the condition where unpollinated berries leave clusters with an uneven, gap-toothed look. Our flowering date is about average, and suggests a harvest beginning the first or second week of September.

Looking back into April, we had only one night of frost, on April 16th. Most of the vineyard had come out of dormancy by mid-April, but our frost protection was largely effective in staving off serious damage. We estimate that some 10%-15% of the vineyard was affected, and expect to see some impact on yields in those areas. Happily, that was the only night where we had frost damage this year, and the four nights in which we had to run our frost prevention systems was one of our lowest totals in recent memory. The grapes most affected by this year's frost were Grenache and Grenache Blanc (typically among the most frost-prone because of their precocious budbreak) which is a blessing in a way, since these grapes are typically among the highest-yielding and typically need aggressive crop thinning anyway.

We finished the winter's rainy season at just under 15 inches, which is just over half of the 28 inches we'd normally expect. Coming on the heels of a 17-inch rainfall in the winter of 2011-2012 (roughly 60% of normal) we're now firmly into a drought cycle here in Paso Robles. The vineyard does not appear to be suffering, at least not yet, but we're keeping an eye on the vines' stress levels and may need to turn on our irrigation lines in a systematic way for the first time since 2009. If we do, we'll be fol-

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To Chill (or, Not Too Chill)

by Jason Haas



If I ask for an ice bucket at a restaurant, you're much more likely to see a bottle of red on the table (and a surprised server) than you are to see a white. And I'm likely to wave away the proffered ice bucket with most of my whites, with the possible exception of something sparkling. An ice bucket for my red wine? And a white let to sit on the table and warm up? Absolutely.

Serve a wine too cold and the flavors are thinned and the aromatics deadened. Serve one too warm and it tastes heavy and alcoholic. Serving temperature matters most to the white wines that are richest and most complex. Within that category -- which includes powerfully built whites like Chardonnay, Semillon, Gewurtztraminer and Pinot Gris, as well as most of the Rhône whites -- the wines that have the highest acidity hold up best

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Focus Varietal: Grenache Blanc

Grenache Blanc is the fourth most widely planted white grape in France. It produces rich, full wines with bright flavors and crisp acidity and is a key element in our flagship white wine, the *Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc*. It is also growing in popularity as a single-varietal wine, particularly in California's Central Coast. As the name suggests, it is related to the more widely known Grenache Noir. Many grape varieties have both red and white variants; the best known is Pinot, which has Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris variations. Grenache Blanc, like Grenache Noir, is drought-resistant, vigorous, easy to graft and ripens fairly early in the cycle, after Viognier and Marsanne, but before Roussanne.

Since we brought Grenache Blanc into our nursery, we have sold budwood and grafted vines to a number of other Rhône-producing vineyards in California. The California climate of hot days and cool nights seems to be perfect for the varietal and encourages its two prime qualities: richness with crisp acids.

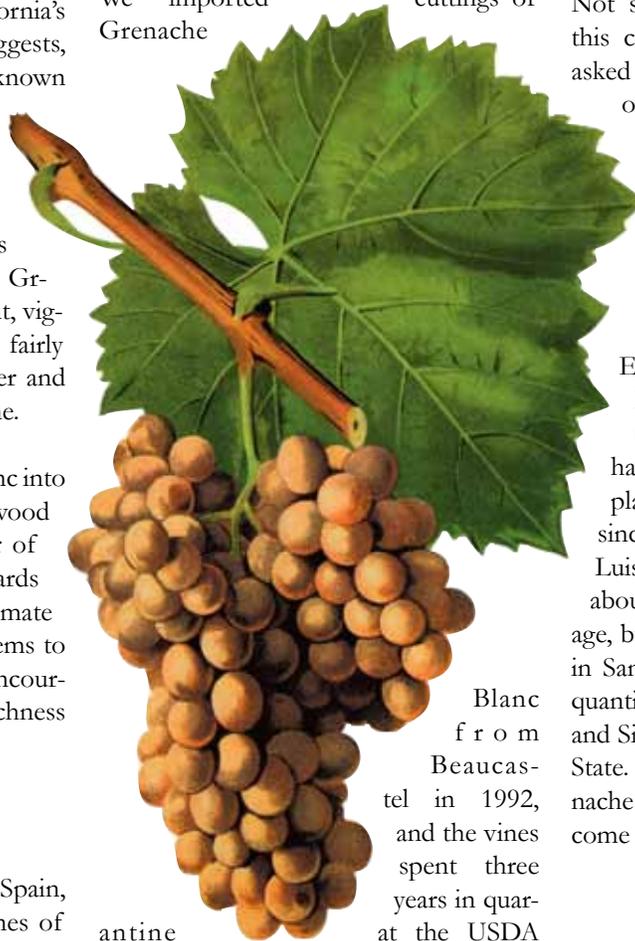
Early History

Grenache Blanc originated in Spain, and still plays a role in the wines of Rioja and Navarre. From Spain, it spread to France, and has thrived in the vineyards of the Rhône valley and Châteauneuf-du-Pape. In Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the crisp acidity

of Grenache Blanc is used to balance the honeyed richness of Roussanne, and white Chateau de Beaucastel is roughly 80% Roussanne and 20% Grenache Blanc.

Grenache Blanc at Tablas Creek

We imported cuttings of Grenache



antine station in Geneva, New York. In 1995, the cuttings were declared virus free and released to us. These vines were received into our nursery and the first grafted vines went into the ground

in 1996. Our first significant harvest of the varietal was 1999. For the next three years (up to and including the 2001 *Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc*), we could only refer to the varietal as Grenache on our label because Grenache Blanc was not yet recognized by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Not surprisingly, many people found this confusing and we were regularly asked why we added a red varietal into our white blend. In 2002 we successfully petitioned the BATF to recognize Grenache Blanc as a separate varietal.

Grenache Blanc in California

Even as plantings of other white Rhône varieties have plateaued, the planting of Grenache Blanc has increased; 44% of the 227 acres planted in California were planted since 2005. It is most present in San Luis Obispo county, which holds about one-third of California's acreage, but it has also been widely planted in Santa Barbara County and in small quantities in California's North Coast and Sierra Foothills, and in Washington State. Most of the single varietal Grenache Blancs released in California have come from the Central Coast.

Aromas and Flavors

Grenache Blanc is straw-colored and produces wines that are high in alcohol, with crisp acids. The nose has bright green apple and mandarin orange aromas, with clean flavors of preserved lemon, mineral and peach. It typically has a lingering finish with a hint of licorice. Although it can stand confidently on its own (as most recently in our 2011 *Grenache Blanc*), its crispness and long finish make it a tremendous blending component. 🍷

Many grape varieties have both red and white variants; the best known is Pinot, which has Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris variations.

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to being served very cold, while those that tend to be broader and richer, and lower in acid, can show very little other than a sake-like creaminess when they're served straight out of the fridge.

We've noticed this in our own blending trials. Roussanne, which at cellar temperature is the richest and most complex white we make, shuts down dramatically when it's served cold. And it does have an impact out in the market; I've noticed wildly divergent notes on CellarTracker about our Roussanne that I think are directly attributable to people tasting it at different temperatures. Grenache Blanc, in contrast, shows quite nicely at low temperatures, in part because of its higher acidity and more traditional fruit flavors. One benefit of blending Grenache Blanc and Picpoul into Roussanne -- as we do in our *Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc* -- is that the blended wine shows much better than a straight Roussanne would at the cold temperatures at which it is often served in restaurants.

For reds, you often hear the recommendation that red wines should be served at "room temperature". That's all well and good, but whose room are we speaking about? What may have been normal room temperature (say, 65 degrees) fifty years ago in the United Kingdom, whence many of these wine maxims originate, is likely cooler than your average American house. And many restaurants are warmer still, heated by the massed diners and the kitchen burners. Most high-end restaurants are now (happily) keeping their wines in temperature-controlled cellars, but I still see too many restaurants with their red wines in bins or on racks on the walls, and even the ones with good cellars aren't likely using them for their by-the-glass wines.

Red wines aren't the same, either, as they were decades ago when the "room temperature" recommendation gained popularity. Most red wines are riper, denser, and higher in alcohol than they were a generation ago, and while these wines can have a lovely richness when they're served cool, warmer temperatures emphasize their more unpleasant aspects, making them seem overweight, alcoholic, and sweet.

Thankfully, it's not that hard to make sure your wines are served at the right temperature. A typical wine cellar is kept in the upper 50s or lower 60s. That's a great starting point for both reds and whites. If you're serving a sparkling, sweeter or lighter-bodied white, or a rosé, stick the bottle in the fridge for half an hour before you're going to open it, and figure you'll serve it around 50 degrees, and it will warm up a bit in the glass. If you're serving a red, take it out of that same cellar maybe a half an hour before you open it -- less if your room is warm -- and the wine will warm up in the glass. Starting with the red wine too warm doesn't leave you many good options, as it's unlikely to cool off once it's poured. But if you get an over-warm red wine when you're eating out, don't be shy about requesting that ice bucket. It's better than asking for an ice cube, right? 🍷



The Tablas Cru pouring at the downtown park as part of the 2013 Paso Robles Wine Festival.

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lowing the pattern we've used in previous droughts: deep watering once or twice early in the growing season, so as not to encourage root growth at the surface but instead to promote growth deeper, where natural reserves of water are more likely to be found in future years.

It's disappointing that after such a promising start (we received nearly 12 inches of rain in November and December) the season ended up so far below average. But we're not worried about the drought affecting quality; looking back we've had two multiple-year drought cycles in the last decade, and the second year of the droughts (2003 and 2008) were both excellent vintages, with yields about average.

Throughout the winter, we have been moving our animal herd from block to block, leaving them in place roughly a week while they chewed down the cover crop and fertilized with their manure. They covered about 40 acres between December and mid-April, when we had to move them to unplanted areas to protect the new vine growth. We've been pleased with the health of the vineyard blocks in which the animals have been kept, though we believe that the most powerful impacts will be felt only in the long term.

In the cellar, we've been bottling the 2011 reds, and completed the blending of the 2012 whites and reds. The 2012 whites will be bottled later this summer, while the reds age in foudre until next spring. The 2012 blends look strong, and it's clear that it was a great year for Roussanne, Syrah and Mourvèdre.

Next up for us in the cellar is getting the 2012 blends made and put into foudre or tank. In the vineyard, we'll be completing the shoot thinning process to make sure that the vines are carrying an appropriate quantity of fruit and that we ensure good air flow through and around the ripening clusters. Then we have a bit of a respite before the crush of harvest. It will be nice to take a deep breath. 🍷

VINsider News



Spring Shipment

The spring VINsider Wine Club shipment (pictured above) is highlighted by the *Panoplie*, our elite wine made in the image of Beaucastel's iconic *Hommage à Jacques Perrin*. We also chose the 2011 *Côtes de Tablas Blanc* from that intense, low-yielding year, the 2012 vintage of our newly-rechristened Mourvedre-based estate rosé *Dianthus*, the 2011 *Patelin de Tablas* that has been winning fans with its freshness and great value, and two varietal reds from the elegant, mineral-laced 2010 vintage: *Grenache* and *Syrah*. Not yet a member? We've reserved a few shipments for late joiners; contact us at 805.237.1231 or sign up at tablascreek.com

New Wine Club Concierge Service

We are pleased to offer a new, complimentary service for our wine club members. Many of you know our associate Joelle Cliff from her great work in the tasting room. She grew up in France and has traveled extensively, and we are excited to announce that she has put her experience at the service of all of you as our new Wine Club Concierge. For advice and reservation help with a visit to Paris, the various wine regions of France, or your next visit to the California Central Coast, contact us at vin insider@tablascreek.com and look forward to a detailed response from Joelle. For more information on Joelle's background and the other services she offers, visit her website: terroistravels.com 🍷

Introducing the *Patelin de Tablas Rosé*!



This summer marks the introduction of *Patelin de Tablas Rosé*, the Grenache-based complement to our Mourvèdre-based *Dianthus*. The *Patelin Rosé* is modeled after the pale salmon, ethereal rosés of Provence and has a nose of wild strawberry, rose petals and citrus. In the mouth, it shows the generous red fruit of Grenache kept clean by vibrant acidity and a spiced citrus note that comes out on the long finish. Look for it in distribution and poured by the glass at your favorite bistro this summer!

Recent Press: Praise for Rosé

In late April we were excited to receive the International Wine Review's annual rosé report and see that our 2012 *Dianthus* had tied for the report's top rosé of the 2012 vintage, receiving 92 points and the comments "What makes this wine so good is its pure, fresh and mineral like character combined with good concentration and excellent balance."

Not to be outdone, the newly-released 2012 *Patelin de Tablas Rosé* received 90 points from the Wine Spectator, the magazine's highest-rated California rosé so far from 2012, and the comments "zesty yet delicate".

Earlier in the spring, the Dallas Morning News named the 2011 *Patelin de Tablas* as an ideal match for an Easter feast, noting that the earthiness of the wine was a good pairing for lamb.

And Dan Berger called the 2012 *Vermentino* "exceptional" and "a delight with oysters and other such foods" in his newsletter Vintage Wine Experiences. 🍷



Tablas Creek: The Next Generation. Sebastian (5) and Eli (8) Haas at the winery in May.

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



WINE ORDER FORM JUNE 2013

DISCOUNTS

Wine Club 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-VINsiders 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: \$15.00
7-12 bottles: \$25.00

CO, ID*,NM, NV*,OR, WA*,WY

1-2 bottles: \$15.00
3-6 bottles: \$25.00
7-12 bottles: \$35.00

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

1-2 bottles: \$20.00
3- 6 bottles: \$30.00
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 for all shipped wine orders.**

WINE

QUANTITY

LIST
PRICE

VINDEPENDENT
PRICE

VINSIDER
PRICE

TOTAL

FEATURED WINE [10% DISCOUNT REFLECTED IN PRICE]

VERMENTINO 2012

\$24.30

\$21.60

\$18.90

WHITE WINES

CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC 2011

\$27.00

\$24.30

\$21.60

ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL

BLANC 2010 (12 bottle limit)

\$40.00

\$36.00

\$32.00

ANTITHESIS 2011

\$35.00

\$31.50

\$28.00

MARSA NNE 2011

\$30.00

\$27.00

\$24.00

ROSÉ WINES

PATELIN DE TABLAS ROSÉ 2012

\$20.00

\$18.00

\$16.00

DIANTHUS 2012

\$27.00

\$24.30

\$21.60

RED WINES

PATELIN DE TABLAS 2011

\$20.00

\$18.00

\$16.00

CÔTES DE TABLAS 2011

\$30.00

\$27.00

\$24.00

ESPRIT DE

BEAUCASTEL 2010 (12 bottle limit)

\$55.00

\$49.50

\$44.00

GRENACHE 2010

\$40.00

\$36.00

\$32.00

SYRAH 2010

\$40.00

\$36.00

\$32.00

PINOT NOIR 2010

\$40.00

\$36.00

\$32.00

ESPRIT DE

BEAUCASTEL 2009 (12 bottle limit)

\$55.00

\$49.50

\$44.00

SUBTOTAL

5% 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 :: order online at www.tablascreek.com

FEATURED WINE: 2012 VERMENTINO

Wines are organic products and, as such, have their own life cycles. At the vineyard, we taste through our cellar every month and see which wines are showing particularly well given the season and the wines' own inherent evolution. As a way of sharing these observations with you, we will periodically spotlight one of our wines. To encourage you to try it, we offer the featured wine, for the designated time only, at a 10% discount. This discount is above and beyond any other discounts that might apply, such as for case purchases or wine club membership.

The featured wine program continues with the 2012 Vermentino, featured from June 1 through June 30, 2013.



Production Notes: The 2012 *Vermentino* is our eleventh bottling of this traditional Mediterranean varietal, known principally in Sardinia, Corsica, and Northern Italy.

Tasting Notes: Shows a zesty, citrusy nose that also includes the fresh green herbs and pronounced minerality characteristic of *Vermentino*. In the mouth, an initial impression of richness quickly turns crisp, with great acids, just a hint of tropical fruit, and a long, bright, meyer lemon/key lime finish.

Suggested Food Pairings: The 2012 *Vermentino* pairs beautifully with hearty seafood dishes, such as tuna or swordfish, or creamy vegetable soups. Try it with linguine with clam sauce or pesto.

Wine Pairing: Braised Tuna or Pacific Swordfish in Vermentino

This zesty dish and its variations celebrate the full-flavored, intense cuisine that is the hallmark of Liguria, Italy. Serve with sautéed Italian greens like chard, kale or broccoli rabe and olive oil-roasted Yellow Finn potatoes.

Ingredients

- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 or 2 red or yellow peppers, white membranes and seeds removed and cut into thin strips
- Several tablespoons of best quality extra-virgin olive oil
- One fresh tuna or Pacific swordfish steak, about 1 ½ to 2 inches thick (use two if small; total weight should be 1 to 1¼ pounds)
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 cup Tablas Creek Vineyard *Vermentino*
- ½ cup pitted black olives, coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp. drained capers, coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped lemon zest
- A few tablespoons of freshly chopped Italian parsley

🍴 Sauté the onions, garlic and pepper strips over medium low heat in the olive oil for about 10 to 15 minutes, using a large, non-stick sauté pan. Remove and set aside.

- 🍴 Pat fish steaks with a paper towel to absorb any moisture. Raise the heat to medium high and add the fish. Quickly sear the fish, adding more olive oil if necessary.
- 🍴 Flip the fish over when it looks like one side is nicely seared (approximately 1½ to 2 minutes), finish searing the other side and salt lightly with kosher salt.
- 🍴 Return the vegetables to the pan, and add the wine. Bring the wine to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium, cover the pan, and simmer until the interior of the fish is no longer opaque (about 10 minutes). Timing depends on the thickness of the fish; keep in mind that the fish will continue to cook even when removed from heat.
- 🍴 Add the olives, capers, lemon zest, and Italian parsley and cook for 2 to 3 minutes.
- 🍴 Transfer fish to heated serving dish, spoon the vegetables on top and around the steaks. Turn up the heat in the pan and reduce the remaining braising liquid until reduced by half (approximately 8 to 10 minutes). Pour over the fish and serve.

Tablas at Home: Coming Events at the Vineyard and in Paso Robles

Sunday, June 23
Real Men Drink Pink

1:00 PM

Join us, along with a dozen local rosé producers, for the ultimate summer wine tasting experience! Held at Star Farms, a virtual oasis just north of Paso Robles, complete with a half-acre blue lagoon pool, white sandy beaches and tropical palm trees, the afternoon begins with a rosé Grand Tasting. The PINK Party immediately follows, and includes swimming, lounging, and an 80s beach dance party with music by the English Beat. The day is rounded out with regional culinary fabulousness presented by top Paso Robles chefs and the best food trucks around. Proceeds will benefit breast cancer programs at the Cancer Support Community – California Central Coast and *must!* charities. Tickets are \$75 for the General Public, \$60 for VINsiders; for tickets or more information go to www.realmendrinkpink.org and enter the code PINKTABLAS for your discount.

Tuesday, July 16
Festival Mozaic Notable Encounter

6:00 PM

We are proud to continue our sponsorship of Festival Mozaic, which brings orchestral and chamber music to the Central Coast each summer. Join us for the 2013 Summer Festival kick off with a behind-the-scenes exploration of composer Patrick Zimmerli's world premiere, *Parisian Memories*, *Parisian Dreams*, commissioned by Curtis Pendleton in honor of her husband, renowned saxophonist Robert Caron, who you may remember from his years at Tablas Creek. Join the composer, musicians and music director Scott Yoo in this black tie evening featuring fine French cuisine and Tablas Creek wines at the elegant home of Sharon Harris and Dennis Schneider. Tickets are \$175 and can be purchased at festivalmozaic.com.

Friday, August 30
Tasting Through the Vineyard

5:00 PM

Want to see the grapes as they're nearly ripe, and taste the wines that (in past years) have come from those same grapes? Take a pre-Labor Day weekend walking tour with Winemaker Neil Collins and Viticulturist Levi Glenn through the vineyards on a warm summer evening. They will discuss the history of the vineyard and our daily hands-on farming techniques. Stop along the way at specific vineyard blocks and taste the wines from those vines, paired with tasty small dishes. \$30 for VINsiders and \$40 for guests; reservations required due to limited space. Contact us at 805.237.1231 to reserve your spot.

Tablas on Tour: National Events

🍷 **June 23, 2013**

Rhone Rangers
Southern California Tasting
Los Angeles, California
800.467.0163
www.rhonerangers.org

🍷 **July 31, 2013**

Winemaker Dinner at Prospect
San Francisco, California
415.247.7770
www.prospectssf.com

🍷 **September 7, 2013**

Green Feast
San Juan Capistrano, California
949.443.4223
www.theecologycenter.org

🍷 **June 29, 2013**

Santa Barbara Wine Festival
Santa Barbara, California
805.682.4711 x112
www.sbnature.org

🍷 **August 2, 2013**

Winemaker Dinner at Windham Hill Inn
West Townshend, Vermont
802.874.4080
www.windhamhill.com

🍷 **September 11-12, 2013**

Rhone Rangers Chicago Tasting
City Winery Chicago
Chicago, Illinois
312.733.9463
www.rhonerangers.org

🍷 **July 11-14, 2013**

Central Coast Wine Classic
Avila Beach, California
805.544.1285
centralcoastwineclassic.org

🍷 **August 6, 2013**

Winemaker Dinner at Lukshon
Culver City, California
310.202.6808
www.lukshon.com

🍷 **September 28-29, 2013**

Sunset SAVOR the Central Coast
Santa Margarita Ranch
Santa Margarita, California
www.savorcentralcoast.com

🍷 **July 14, 2013**

Celebrate Chefs and Cellars
Palos Verdes Estates, California
310.548.4672
celebratechefs.com

🍷 **August 18, 2013**

Family Winemakers of California Tasting
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco, California
www.familywinemakers.org

🍷 **December 1-3, 2013**

Yosemite Vintners' Holidays
Ahwahnee Hotel
Yosemite Park, California
559.252.4848
www.yosemitenpark.com

Meet the Tablas Creek Team! Questions for Neil Collins

Neil is Executive Winemaker and Vineyard Manager at Tablas Creek. He has been an integral part of the Tablas Creek project from the beginning- helping to shape every vintage since we began in 1994, with the exception of 1997 when he was working at Beaucastel. He is originally from Bristol, England, but has been in the United States since 1984. Neil can often be spotted cruising through the cellar, wearing a scruffy beard and a thoughtful grin. Marketing Coordinator Lauren Cross interviewed him in May, 2013.

How did you come to live in the States, specifically the Central Coast?

I came for a 6-week vacation to visit my sister in Santa Barbara and never went home. I worked as a chef at Paradise Café. I always say, "I met my wife in Paradise" because we were both working there when we met.

What inspired you to become a winemaker?

I tasted a '91 Chave Hermitage and was hooked. I was already involved in the wine industry through my work in restaurants. I sought out my first harvest and training at Wild Horse and then worked with John Munch at Adelaida Cellars.

Which TCV wine is your go-to on a warm summer day? Non-TCV summer wine?

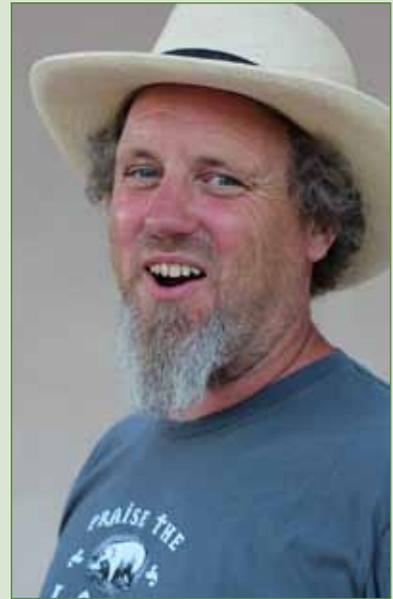
The Tablas Creek *Rosé* or *Vermentino*; Lone Madrone's *La Mezcla*

One unique and interesting fact that most people don't know about you?

I'm turning 50 this year. I was born on Friday the 13th, and this year my birthday is once again on Friday the 13th!

If you couldn't be a winemaker, you had to choose a different career, what would you be?

A professional soccer player.



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