

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



The VINformer
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2013 Harvest Report

On Monday, October 7th we picked the last fruit off our estate, and four days later we brought in the last lot for our *Patelin de Tablas* wines. And just like that, harvest was finished. This year's harvest was both the earliest to end (by nearly three weeks) and of the shortest duration (42 days) since 2001.

The 2013 vintage is shaping up to be a classic in Paso Robles. Though quantities were down, quality looks tremendous. We're starting to hear comparisons to 2007, which is the best vintage here in the last decade, and we think they're warranted. The wines are remarkably deep in both color and flavor, with good acids and substantial but ripe tannins. It's going to be a pleasure putting the blends together, and because of the early finish, we'll be able to do that sooner than usual.

We brought in a total of 280 tons -- 115 tons of white grapes and 165 tons of red grapes. The final yields are markedly down from the 356 tons in 2012, though not to the frost-diminished levels of a year like 2011 or 2009. The smaller crop in 2013 is attributable to a combination of our second consecutive dry winter and a hangover from the comparatively large crop that the vines set in 2012, particularly Grenache, Grenache Blanc and Vermentino. We harvested essentially equal quantities of Mourvèdre and Roussanne, but that's more a function of their relatively lower yields in 2012 -- most notably Mourvèdre's 20% loss last year to sunburn -- than it is to them showing unexpected vigor in 2013.

See **HARVEST**, page 3



New AVA's in Paso

by Jason Haas

Nearly seven years after it was submitted to the TTB, the petition from the Paso Robles wine community to establish eleven AVA's within the current Paso Robles AVA has been published for comments. This is the critical step called a "notice of proposed rule making" in which the TTB (tasked with protecting the public from misleading or confusing information about wine) has reviewed all the geological, climatological and historical information presented in the petitions and determined that they pass muster. It doesn't mean that the region can start using them on wine labels yet, but it's an important validation of the proposed AVA's and boundaries, and the last step before final approval.

Until January 21, 2014, interested parties can submit a comment at the TTB Web site in support of or in opposition to the plan. I'm hopeful that with all the hard science that went into the petitions, and the broad cross-section of the Paso Robles wine community that was involved in their submission, approval will be relatively straightforward. The Paso Robles AVA Committee included 59 different grower and winery members -- including Tablas Creek -- from every one of the proposed AVA's.

For the Paso Robles region, the publication for review of our AVA petition is an important and necessary milestone. Paso Robles is currently the largest unsubdivided AVA within California at approximately 614,000 acres. By contrast, the Napa Valley appellation (which includes sixteen AVA's delineated within its bounds) is roughly one-third the area at 225,000 acres. When the Paso Robles

See **AVA**, page 3

Focus Varietals: Clairette Blanche and Terret Noir

Regular followers of Tablas Creek will know that we selected and imported our eight principal Rhône varieties (Roussanne, Marsanne, Grenache Blanc, Viognier, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Counoise) in 1989, before we had even started laying out the vineyard. It was cuttings from these vines, post-quarantine and post-propagation, that we started planting in 1994, and which we've used to plant the rest of the vineyard. We continued over the next decade to bring in additional clones of several varieties, and added one new grape (Picpoul Blanc) that went in the ground in 2000.

We've been surprised at times about the varieties that have thrived here. Many, most notably Mourvèdre, Grenache and Roussanne, we expected to do well, and chose our property accordingly. But others, like Grenache Blanc, Picpoul Blanc and Counoise, seem to develop character in Paso Robles that they only occasionally, if ever, achieve in France.

In 2003, we decided to bring in the rest of the Châteauneuf du Pape grapes: Bourboulenc, Cinsault, Clairette Blanche, Muscardin, Picardan, Terret Noir and Vaccarese. We waited as the vines were quarantined (they all had

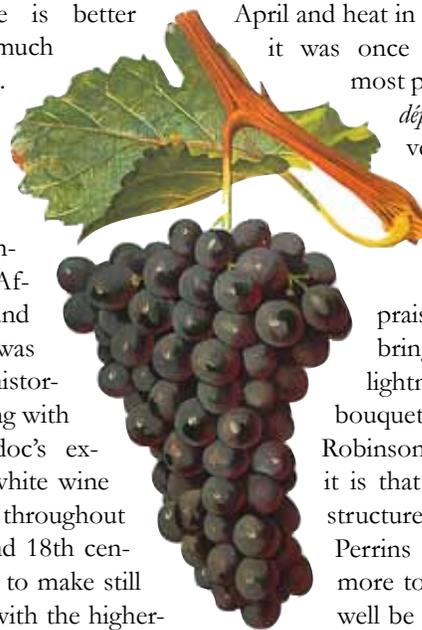
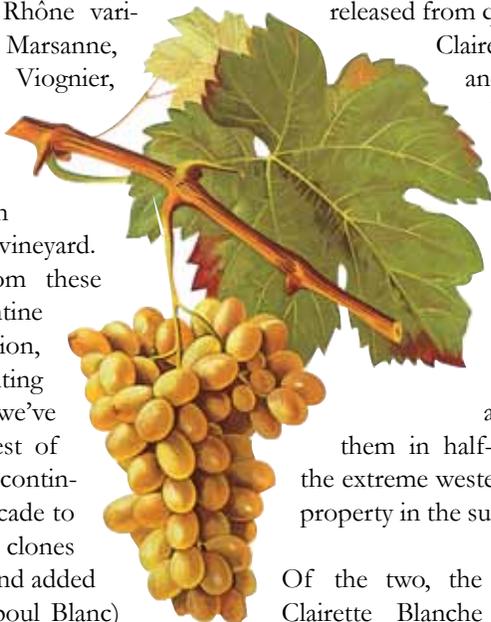
viruses) and then cleaned up at U.C. Davis. The first two varietals to be released from quarantine were Clairette Blanche and Terret Noir. We received the vines in summer 2010, sent them to our nursery partner NovaVine for propagation, and planted them in half-acre blocks at the extreme western edge of the property in the summer of 2011.

Of the two, the character of Clairette Blanche is better known, and it's much more widely planted. Jancis Robinson catalogued about 7500 acres in the Rhône Valley at the end of the 1990's, and additional acreage in South Africa, Australia, Italy and Eastern Europe. It was even more important historically, and formed, along with Picpoul, the Languedoc's extraordinarily popular white wine that was exported throughout Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is used both to make still wines (often blended with the higher-acid Picpoul or Grenache Blanc) and to

make the Rhône Valley's best-known sparkling wines in Clairette de Die. In Châteauneuf de Pape, Clairette Blanche makes up 2.5% of the total plantings in the appellation, the most for any white varietal, slightly more than Grenache Blanc's 2%.

Clairette Blanche tends to have floral, mineral, almost soapy aromas, to be relatively low in acid, and to oxidize easily.

Terret Noir is less well known; as of 2007, there were only 470 acres of Terret Noir planted in France, a decline from the 1000 acres planted in 2000. It is reputed to keep its acidity well late in the growing season and to bud late, both useful characteristics in Paso Robles, where we are prone to frost in April and heat in October. Although it was once (before 1850) the most planted variety in the *département* of Hérault, very little is reported about its flavors. Our 1904-edition French ampelography praises Terret Noir for bringing "qualities of lightness, freshness, and bouquet". About all Jancis Robinson has to say about it is that it "can add useful structure and interest". The Perrins don't have much more to report, so we may well be making the first serious investigation into Terret Noir in more than a century.



We welcome two new Châteauneuf du Pape varietals to Tablas Creek, and are looking forward to seeing how they produce in Paso Robles.

We harvested small quantities of both new varietals this fall, marking the first ever picking of these grapes in California. We promise to share what we learn with you.

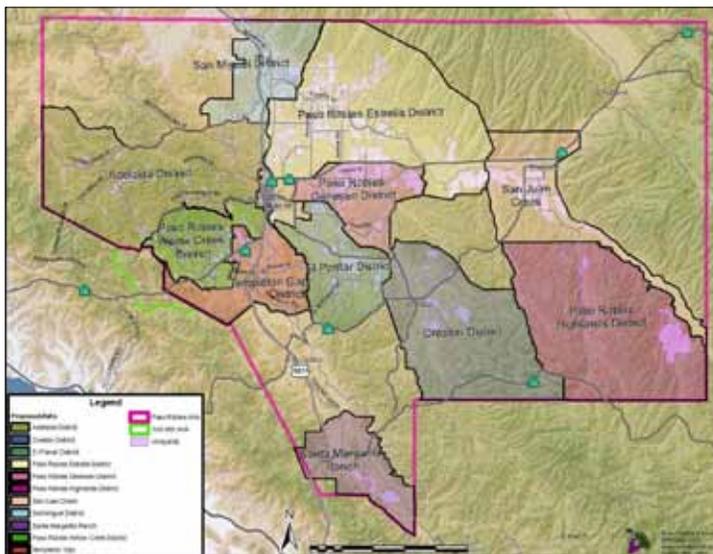
AVA, from page 1

AVA was first proposed and approved in 1983, it contained only five bonded wineries and less than 5000 planted acres of vineyard. Big swaths of the AVA, including the area out near us, were largely untouched by grapevines. In the last thirty years, Paso Robles has grown to encompass more than 280 wineries and 32,000 vineyard acres. This vineyard acreage is spread over a sprawling district roughly 42 miles east to west and 32 miles north to south. Average rainfall varies from more than 30 inches a year in extreme western sections to less than 10 inches in areas farther east. Elevations range from 700 feet to more than 2400 feet. Soils differ dramatically in different parts of the AVA, from the highly calcareous hills out near us to sand, loam and alluvial soils in the Estrella River basin. The warmest parts of the AVA accumulate roughly 20% more heat (measured by growing degree days) than the coolest.

All this is not to say that Paso Robles doesn't share some important factors, and one important hurdle that the petitions had to clear was demonstrating that the region enjoyed sufficient macro-level similarity to remain an AVA. The TTB's ruling recognized several characteristics that the entire region shares, including the 40-50 degree diurnal temperature variation, the 320 days of sun each year, the relatively warm climate with limited incursion of marine air, and the moderate rainfall.

The AVA system is so important exactly because it has the flexibility to recognize macro-level similarities as well as important micro-level distinctiveness. Think of France: that Burgundy shares overarching characteristics doesn't mean it's of no value to distinguish Chambertin from Meursault, or Chassagne-Montrachet from Volnay. The appellation system, at its best, gives consumers both a broad-level understanding of what grapes will grow best and what character they should expect from the region's soils and climate.

One risk in the creation of new AVA's within an existing one is that the existing AVA -- which the local wineries have invested enormous amounts of time and money in marketing -- will lose much of its significance as many wineries abandon that appellation name to make a name for their new, smaller one. Happily, Paso Robles won't lose its identity -- or the accumulated marketing capital we've all built over the last three decades -- thanks to a conjunctive labeling law passed by the California assembly with the encouragement of the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance in 2007. Conjunctive labeling means that wineries who choose to use one of the new AVA's will also be required to use "Paso Robles" as significantly. This law was modeled on one passed for the Napa Valley in 1990 that has been widely credited with helping maintain Napa as the most powerful brand in American wine.



The continued presence of Paso Robles on wine labels does not diminish the impact of having the different AVA's approved. These new AVA's will be a powerful tool for wineries to explain why certain grapes are particularly well suited to certain parts of the appellation, and why some wines show the characteristics they do while other wines, from the same or similar grapes, show differently. Ultimately, the new AVA's will allow these newly created sub-regions to develop identities for themselves with a clarity impossible in a single large AVA.

HARVEST, from page 1

Overall yields ended up at 2.66 tons per acre, which is on the low side of average for us. Our ten-year baseline is 2.9 tons per acre; years in which we've seen yields between 2.5 and 3 tons per acre have included 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2008, all of which have been excellent and have been aging very well.

Measures of sugar and pH show 2013 quite close to 2012, and it's probably not surprising, as the two years were broadly similar, both warm and dry. The darker colors and more intense flavors, particularly in Grenache, that we're seeing compared to 2012 seem likely due to the yields, rather than ripeness at harvest. It's also interesting (and positive, from our perspective) that we're seeing the intensity of a year like 2007 with sugars a full point and a half lower. This fact supports our experience that as vines age they are better able to achieve full intensity at lower sugar levels.

Finally, the harvest has been exciting because we've gotten to work with two grapes that are new to us, each celebrating their first harvest anywhere in America. We haven't yet learned much about Clairette Blanche or Terret Noir (except that the "noir" in Terret Noir is a bit of a misnomer) but we have a barrel of each fermenting in the cellar and it's going to be fun to see how they turn out.



The newest member of our biodynamic family: Carmel the llama.

Wine on Tap

One of the most exciting developments in the world of wine over the past few years has been the explosion of restaurants and wine bars with wine tap systems. Wine on tap has the advantages of freshness (each pour is replaced by an inert gas, so the wine never oxidizes), efficiency (no more wasted “end of bottle” wine) and environmental friendliness (kegs are washed and refilled, eliminating the waste of bottles, capsules, corks and labels). In the 2012 vintage we filled over 500 5-gallon kegs with our *Patelin de Tablas* wines. In 2013, we'll increase that to more than 700. Look for it around California right now, and in several more states next year!



VINsider News: Spring 2014 Shipment

We are proud to announce the spring 2014 VINsider Club shipment, highlighted by the 2011 *Panoplie*. The shipment includes:

- 1 bottle of 2011 *Panoplie*, our elite red wine available only to VINsiders, (96 points Wine Advocate, “might end up being the wine of the vintage from Paso Robles”)
- 1 bottle of 2012 *Côtes de Tablas*, our showcase for Grenache’s juiciness and spice (91-93 points Wine Advocate, 91-92 points Tanzer’s IWC)
- 1 bottle of 2012 *Patelin de Tablas* (91 points Tanzer’s IWC, “one of my top California wine values of 2013.”)
- 1 bottle of 2012 *Grenache Blanc*, a varietal bottling of the zesty white Rhône grape we introduced to California (90 points Tanzer’s IWC)
- 1 bottle of 2012 *Côtes de Tablas Blanc*, our showcase for Viognier, balanced by the acids and mineral of Grenache Blanc and Marsanne (91 points Tanzer’s IWC)
- 1 bottle of 2012 *Roussanne*, a single varietal bottling of our most important white grape (91 points Tanzer’s IWC)

The spring shipment will be sent out on Tuesday, March 18. Will-call customers can pick up their shipments at the winery starting Friday, March 14. If you have any questions, or need to update your membership, you can contact our wine club team at 805.237.1231 x39 or vinsider@tablascreek.com



We were honored to return to the San Francisco 49ers owner’s box as part of their wine program. Tablas Creek was the featured wine for the October 13th game against the Arizona Cardinals, and Jason and Eli Haas took the opportunity to admire the Lombardi trophies. Back at the vineyard, Sebastian Haas (age 6) supported our biodynamic program by feeding some of our animals.

Recent Press

In the August 2013 issue, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate awarded 30 Tablas Creek wines 90+ point ratings, including our first-ever 99, for the 2007 *Panoplie*. Other highlights included 94 points for the 2010 *Esprit de Beaucautel*, called a "superbly balanced beauty" and 90 points for the 2011 *Patelin de Tablas*, which he noted "should be purchased by the case". The review also included great scores for library *Esprits*, including 2002 (95 points), 2003 (94 points) & 2005 (95 points).

In November, we received our annual review from Josh Reynolds of Stephen Tanzer’s International Wine Cellar. We were thrilled to see that this conservative scorer gave all 21 wines he tasted scores of 90 points or higher.

Tablas Creek was also named by Food & Wine magazine as one of the 75 best California wineries to visit (and one of only two in Paso Robles) in the October 2013 issue. Paso Robles itself was named “Wine Region of the Year” by the Wine Enthusiast.

In the blogosphere, we loved the article on Winethropology, where Steve McIntosh said, “Categorically, these wines are of uncommonly superior quality. You can taste it. There is an honesty with which they speak that is impossible to miss. Clarity and focus are pervasive across the board in reds and whites alike.” Also online, Paul Gregutt did a nice feature on Tablas Creek (“the Rhône Revolution started here”) and described the Tablas Creek wines as “subtle, elegant and complex.”

And, finally, seven different publications picked seven different Tablas Creek wines as perfect pairings for Thanksgiving dinner. Thanksgiving may be over, but the holidays aren’t, and we hope you will pick one of our wines to pair with your holiday meals!

More reviews and articles featuring Tablas Creek are available at tablascreek.com.

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



WINE ORDER FORM DECEMBER 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: \$20.00
7-12 bottles: \$30.00

CO, ID*,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, 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: \$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 for all shipped wine orders.**

WINE

QUANTITY

LIST PRICE

VINDEPENDENT PRICE

VINSIDER PRICE

TOTAL

SPECIAL PACKAGES [SHIPPING INCLUDED; DETAILS ON P. 6]

ESPRIT DE TABLAS
GIFT PACK (2 bottles)

_____ \$95.00 \$85.50 \$76.00 _____

LIBRARY VERTICAL OF ESPRIT DE
BEAUCASTEL GIFT PACK (3 bottles)

_____ \$170.00 \$153.00 \$136.00 _____

GREAT WHITES
GIFT PACK (3 bottles)

_____ \$87.00 \$78.30 \$69.60 _____

UNUSUAL VARIETALS
GIFT PACK (4 bottles)

_____ \$134.00 \$120.60 \$107.20 _____

WHITE WINES

PATELIN DE TABLAS BLANC 2012

_____ \$20.00 \$18.00 \$16.00 _____

CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC 2011

_____ \$27.00 \$24.30 \$21.60 _____

ESPRIT DE TABLAS BLANC 2011

_____ \$40.00 \$36.00 \$32.00 _____

VERMENTINO 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 TABLAS 2011

_____ \$55.00 \$49.50 \$44.00 _____

FULL CIRCLE PINOT NOIR 2011

_____ \$45.00 \$40.50 \$36.00 _____

MOURVÈDRE 2011

_____ \$40.00 \$36.00 \$32.00 _____

TANNAT 2011

_____ \$40.00 \$36.00 \$32.00 _____

ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL 2010

_____ \$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 :: order online at www.tablascreek.com

2013 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 four 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 34 states we can ship to. These special holiday packs will only be available for pickup or shipment until the end of December. For gift orders, we are happy to enclose a holiday message. To order, visit tablascreek.com or call 805.237.1231.



Esprit de Tablas Gift Pack (2-pack)

A bottle each of our two newest signature wines:

- 2011 *Esprit de Tablas*
- 2011 *Esprit de Tablas Blanc*

\$95 per pack, and \$76 per pack for VINsiders.



Library Vertical of Esprit de Beaucastel Gift Pack (3 bottles)

A bottle each of our signature library wines:

- 2008 *Esprit de Beaucastel*
- 2009 *Esprit de Beaucastel*
- 2010 *Esprit de Beaucastel*

\$170 per pack, and \$136 per pack for VINsiders.



Great Whites Gift Pack (3 bottles)

A bottle each of our most popular white wines:

- 2011 *Esprit de Tablas Blanc*
- 2012 *Cotes de Tablas Blanc*
- 2012 *Patelin de Tablas Blanc*

\$87 per pack, and \$69.60 per pack for VINsiders.

Unusual Varietals Gift Pack (4 bottles)

A bottle each of our exciting unusual varietals:

- 2012 *Picpoul Blanc*
- 2011 *Tannat*
- 2011 *Mourvèdre*
- 2012 *Vermentino*

\$134 per pack, and \$107.20 per pack for VINsiders.



Meet the Tablas Creek Team! Questions for Nicole Getty

Nicole has been the Wine Club and Hospitality Director at Tablas Creek since 2004.



How did you come to live in the Central Coast?

I moved here in 1990 to attend Cal Poly and after moving away for a short period, I realized that I didn't want to live anywhere else! Most Cal Poly alumni don't want to leave the area, and I was fortunate enough to find a great job that would allow me to stay.

What is your favorite part of being the Tablas Creek Wine Club and Hospitality Director?

The relationships and rapport I've been able to develop after almost 10 years with our long-standing club members as well as the Tablas Creek staff. It's easy to sell a great product and it makes people happy!

What have you been up to when you're not at Tablas Creek?

My husband and I stay quite busy exploring the Central Coast with our 15-month old son. We slip in good food and wine when we can, of course!

Which Tablas Creek wine is your go-to on a cool winter night?

Tablas Creek *Mourvèdre*; it's a great winter food wine.

What part of the Tablas Creek project are you most excited about?

It's been really exciting to be a part of the growth and success that we've had over the years, the growing wine club, the building expansion, the biodynamic program, the animals. I'm excited to see where we'll be in the next 5 years.

If you had to choose a different career, what would you be?

Everyone knows the love I have for animals. If I were to do something else, I would love to work with animals in some capacity. Maybe in my retirement years!

Wine Pairing: Pork Loin Roasted with Apples and Winter Vegetables

This Haas family favorite is a delicious one-pot winter meal. It pairs beautifully with the juicy brightness of a Grenache-based wine unencumbered by oak, such as the Côtes de Tablas or Grenache.

Ingredients

2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 2-lb boneless center cut pork loin, trimmed and tied
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 medium onion, thickly sliced
2 carrots, thickly sliced
3 parsnips, peeled and thickly sliced
10 small potatoes, halved
2 stalks celery, thickly sliced
1 bunch radishes, trimmed
2 cloves garlic, smashed
3 sprigs fresh thyme
3 sprigs fresh rosemary
4 tbsp cold unsalted butter
4 apples, peeled, cored and cut into 8 sections

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
- In a large ovenproof skillet or Dutch oven, heat the vegetable oil over high heat. Generously season the pork loin all over with salt and pepper. Sear the meat until golden brown on all sides, about 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer the meat to a plate and set aside.
- Add the onion, carrot, celery, potatoes, parsnips, radishes, garlic, herb sprigs and 2 tablespoons of butter to the skillet. Stir until the vegetables are browned, about 10 minutes. Stir in the sliced apples, then push the mixture to the sides and set the pork loin in the middle of the pan, along with any collected juices on the plate. Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast the loin about 35-40 minutes, until the center of the meat reaches 140 to 150 degrees F.
- Transfer the pork to a cutting board. Arrange the apples and vegetables on a serving platter, and discard the herb sprigs. Remove the strings from the pork, slice into 1/2-inch thick pieces, arrange over the apple mixture, and serve.

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

Sunday, February 16, 2014

Paso Robles Rhône Rangers Experience

On the Sunday of President's Day Weekend, Tablas Creek will join the 45+ other members of the Paso Robles Rhone Rangers chapter for a day celebrating the vibrant Rhone community in Paso Robles. Events include a fun and educational "Rhone essentials" seminar, a vintners' lunch, a silent auction and a Grand Tasting featuring over 150 Paso Robles Rhone-style wines.

The day's events will take place at Broken Earth Winery on Highway 46 just east of Paso Robles. Tickets for the full slate of activities, including the seminar and lunch (10:30am-1:00pm) and the Grand Tasting (1:30pm-4:00pm) are \$85, and tickets for the Grand Tasting alone are just \$35. Qualified trade is admitted free to the Grand Tasting. For tickets or more information visit rhoneangers.org.

10:30 AM

Saturday, March 15

Paso Robles Zinfandel Festival

On the Saturday of Zinfandel Festival, we will be preparing small bites to pair with our wines. These pairings are free to VINsiders, and included with a tasting fee for others. Food pairing begins at 11 a.m. and continues until we run out. Also, guests will enjoy live ambient music by a talented local musician.

11:00 AM

Saturday, April 26

Blending Seminar

Join us for our annual blending seminar! Jason Haas and wine-maker Neil Collins will lead a barrel tasting of the individual varietals (both reds and whites), and then will set you loose with graduated cylinders to produce your own blend. This event is extremely popular and sells out quickly. The cost is \$30 for VINsiders and \$40 for guests. Space is limited and reservations are required; contact us at events@tablascreek.com or 805.237.1231 x30.

10:00 AM

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9339 Adelaida Road
Paso Robles, CA 93446

