

# Tablas Creek Vineyard

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Tablas Creek 2007	Antithesis (Chardonnay)	White	(91-94)
Tablas Creek 2006	Côtes de Tablas	Red	89
Tablas Creek 2005	Côtes de Tablas	Red	91
Tablas Creek 2007	Côtes de Tablas Blanc	White	(88-90)
Tablas Creek 2006	Côtes de Tablas Blanc	White	90
Tablas Creek 2006	Esprit de Beaucastel	Red	(91-93)
Tablas Creek 2005	Esprit de Beaucastel	Red	92
Tablas Creek 2007	Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc	White	(92-94)
Tablas Creek 2006	Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc	White	91
Tablas Creek 2006	Grenache	Red	88
Tablas Creek 2007	Grenache Blanc	White	(87-88)
Tablas Creek 2006	Grenache Blanc	White	88
Tablas Creek 2006	Mourvèdre	Red	90

"Readers would be hard pressed to find more French-like wines in the Paso Robles corridor than those produced by Tablas Creek. This is a partnership between renowned importer Robert Haas (Vineyard Brands), one of the pioneers of estate-bottled French wines, and François Perrin, one of the owners of Château Beaucastel in Châteauneuf du Pape. Haas and Perrin run a serious vineyard operation with vines planted on the steep hillsides in pure limestone soils, not far from the Pacific Ocean. All of these cuvées possess distinctive personalities, good acids, and striking minerality. Even though they make very good single varietal wines, I still believe their strength lies in their sensational blends. That said, my two favorite dry whites, other than the blended wines, are their Chablis-like, unwooded Antithesis Chardonnay and the tank-fermented and aged, exquisite Vermentino. The intense aromatics and flavors of the **2007 Antithesis Chardonnay** may be even better. Sadly, there are only 200 cases of this beauty, which spends time in old wood. No doubt the 2007 vintage's incredibly low yields have added a layer of concentration that does not exist in either 2006 or 2005. The dry, fruity **2007 Vermentino** (375 cases produced) exhibits a wonderfully crisp, vibrant nose of subtle mint, licorice, and lemon zest, along with an intense, crisp mouthfeel. Drink it over the next few years. The **2006 Grenache Blanc** reveals aromas of pepper, paper white narcissus, and licorice in a medium-bodied, fresh style. It is slightly heavier than the Vermentino, but is as fine as well as rare example of a 100% Grenache Blanc. The **2006 Roussanne** possesses classic notes of white flowers, honeysuckle, rose petals, and meat along with more body, a waxy richness, and abundant density. This is the type of dry white that requires intensely flavored seafood or poultry dishes given its forceful personality. Two white wine blends include the **2006 Côtes de Tablas Blanc**. This beautiful wine is performing better out of bottle than it did last year from tank. A blend of 59% Viognier, 32% Marsanne, and the rest Grenache Blanc and Roussanne, it exhibits aromas of tropical fruits, lemon blossom, grapefruit, crushed rocks, and quince. This medium-bodied, dry, personality-filled white is best consumed over the next 2-3 years. The luscious, flowery, honeyed **2006 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc** (65% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, and 5% Picpoul) reveals a lovely floral-scented nose with hints of bees wax, honeysuckle, rose petals, marmalade, and tropical fruits. Medium to full-bodied with terrific acidity as well as a heady finish, it will provide pleasure over the next 2-3 years.

The **2007 Côtes de Tablas Blanc**, a blend of 38% Viognier, 25% Marsanne, 20% Roussanne, and 17% Grenache Blanc, offers up aromas of honeysuckle, white currants, apricots, and quince as well as a hint of tropical fruits. This medium-bodied, refreshing, zesty white should drink well for 2-3 years. The medium-bodied **2007 Grenache Blanc** reveals crisp acidity along with plenty of white currant and underripe peach as well as apricot characteristics. The full-bodied **2007 Roussanne** looks to be sensational. It is a big, oily, thick white with enough acidity to balance out the waxy, honeyed marmalade-like richness. Another stunning effort is the **2007 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc**, a blend of 68% Roussanne, 22% Grenache Blanc, and the balance other varietals. It exhibits abundant floral notes intermixed with notions of licorice, orange blossoms, lemon oil, white currants, and honeyed grapefruit, good fruit, medium to full body, and terrific acidity as well as freshness.

The 2005 red wines have all been bottled. They include the seductive, straightforward **2005 Syrah**, which includes 10% Grenache in the blend. It offers blackberry and cassis fruit, medium body, a soft texture, and good purity and depth. A blend of 90% Mourvèdre and 10% Syrah, the **2005 Mourvèdre** may turn out to be outstanding. It does not reveal any of the rustic, earthy, tree bark, mushroomy character this varietal often possesses, but rather, bluer fruits intermixed with truffle, soil, and meaty characteristics. This impressively endowed, medium to full-bodied, spicy, peppery 2005 should drink nicely for 5-7 years. Tablas Creek's Côtes du Rhône effort is the exceptional **2005 Côtes de Tablas**, a blend of 43% Grenache, 24% Mourvèdre, 18% Syrah, and 15% Counoise. There are 3,900 cases of this delicious, deep ruby/purple-hued offering. Aromas of smoke, roasted herbs, meat juices, black currants and cherries are followed by a medium

Tablas Creek 2005	Mourvèdre	Red	88+
Tablas Creek 2006	Panoplie	Red	(91-94)
Tablas Creek 2005	Panoplie	Red	95
Tablas Creek 2007	Roussanne	White	(91-93)
Tablas Creek 2006	Roussanne	White	90
Tablas Creek 2006	Syrah	Red	(89-91)
Tablas Creek 2005	Syrah	Red	87
Tablas Creek 2007	Vermentino	White	90
Tablas Creek 2006	Vin de Paille	Sweet Dessert	92
Tablas Creek 2006	Vin de Paille Quintessence	Sweet Dessert	(95-98)
Tablas Creek 2005	Vin de Paille Sacre Rouge	Red Dessert	90

to full-bodied wine displaying beautiful purity, fruit, and depth. Drink it over the next 5-6 years. **2005 Esprit de Beaucastel** is a 3,500-case blend of 44% Mourvèdre, 26% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and 5% Counoise. Its dense ruby/purple hue is accompanied by a beautiful perfume of road tar, camphor, meat, Provençal herbs, blackberries, cassis, cherries, licorice, and pepper. This Beaucastel-like beauty boasts full body, excellent tannin and structure as well as good accessibility. Enjoy it over the next decade. Tablas Creek's top red is the 350-case **2005 Panoplie** (composed of 70% Mourvèdre, 25% Grenache, and 5% Syrah). This is the most compelling Mourvèdre-dominated wine made in California, if not the New World. Its dense ruby/purple color is followed by a stunning bouquet of smoky, gamy, Peking duck, fresh mushrooms, burning embers, and loads of black fruits. This dense, full-bodied, tannic 2005 is the California equivalent of the luxury cuvée of Château Beaucastel, the Hommage à Jacques Perrin. Give it 1-2 years of bottle age and drink it over the following 15+. The more challenging 2006 vintage has produced a lighter-styled, medium-bodied, soft, pleasant **2006 Côtes de Tablas**, a blend of 72% Grenache, 11% Syrah, 9% Mourvèdre, and the rest mixed varietals. It exhibits a dark ruby color, medium body, soft fruit, plenty of red currant and smoked duck notes, and hints of licorice as well as mint. Displaying classic kirsch liqueur notes interwoven with pepper, licorice, and loamy soil, the **2006 Grenache** will drink well for 2-3 years. The outstanding **2006 Mourvèdre** (which includes 10% Syrah) boasts abundant quantities of blueberries and blackberries along with gamy, smoky, earthy notes intermixed with hints of incense and spring flowers. This beautiful wine exhibits stunning concentration, richness, and length. Once more Tablas Creek demonstrates that they are the leading New World practitioner of this tricky varietal. A blend of 90% Syrah and 10% Grenache, the **2006 Syrah** is a fleshy example of this cuvée. The Grenache component has provided uplift to this full-bodied, seriously endowed effort. It possesses plenty of black fruits along with charcoal, pepper, and spring flowers. Consume it during its first 5-7 years of life. A superb effort, the **2006 Esprit de Beaucastel** (45% Mourvèdre, 28% Grenache, 22% Syrah, and 5% Counoise) boasts a deep ruby/purple hue along with aromas of blue and black fruits, forest floor, and spring flowers, and a full-bodied personality displaying terrific intensity, richness, and length. Drink it over the next 10-12 years. The luxury cuvée of **2006 Panoplie** is composed of 68% Mourvèdre, 27% Grenache, and 5% Syrah. While it may not possess the prodigious quality of the 2005, it offers beautiful aromas of fresh mushrooms, Peking duck, soy, balsamic, blueberry, blackberry, and smoked herb. A dense ruby/purple color, medium to full-bodied power, and superb intensity, balance, and equilibrium suggest it will be at its peak between 2010 and 2022+.

I tasted a handful of 2007 reds, which appears to be a superb vintage for Tablas Creek. (Production was down 15% for the red wine varietals and 30% for the whites, thus giving everything an extra degree of concentration.)

Tablas Creek also makes three intriguing dessert wines. The **2006 Vin de Paille** is a blend of Grenache, Viognier, Roussanne, and Marsanne that have been dried on straw mats. It exhibits plenty of marmalade and honeyed tropical fruits, zesty acidity, and abundant character and personality. It should age for many years, but I would opt for drinking it over the next 5-7 years. A compelling effort is the **2006 Vin de Paille Quintessence**. Made from 100% Roussanne, it only possesses 10% alcohol, and is quite extraordinary. There is only one barrel, and it will be bottled in half bottles. A wine of great intensity with oily, viscous, marmalade, maple syrup-like, Grand Marnier, rose liqueur, and honeyed tropical fruit characteristics, this thrilling effort is the finest Vin de Paille Tablas Creek has yet made. Made from 100% Mourvèdre, the sweet, funky, exotic **2005 Sacre Rouge** reveals abundant quantities of chocolate, kinky, blue and black fruits intermixed with notions of game and earth. While some will find it somewhat strange, it is an impressive, well-balanced effort."

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