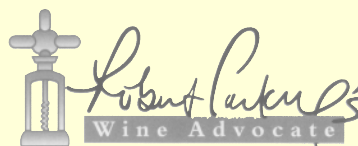


# TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



Closing Date: 8-28-06  
Issue 166

TABLAS CREEK	2005	ROSÉ	PASO ROBLES	ROSÉ	89
TABLAS CREEK	2005	ANTITHESIS (CHARDONNAY)	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(91-93)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	ANTITHESIS (CHARDONNAY)	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	89
TABLAS CREEK	2004	CÔTES DE TABLAS	PASO ROBLES	RED	88
TABLAS CREEK	2005	CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(90-92)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	90
TABLAS CREEK	2004	ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL	PASO ROBLES	RED	92
TABLAS CREEK	2005	ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(91-93)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	91
TABLAS CREEK	2005	GRENACHE BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(89-91)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	GRENACHE BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	90
TABLAS CREEK	2004	PANOPLIE	PASO ROBLES	RED	95
TABLAS CREEK	2005	PICPOUL	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(88-90)
TABLAS CREEK	2005	ROUSSANNE	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(90-93)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	SYRAH	PASO ROBLES	RED	87
TABLAS CREEK	2005	VERMENTINO	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(88-90)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	VERMENTINO	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	89
TABLAS CREEK	2004	VIN DE PAILLE	PASO ROBLES	SWEET WHITE	92
TABLAS CREEK	2003	VIN DE PAILLE SACRE ROUGE	PASO ROBLES	SWEET RED	93
TABLAS CREEK	2005	VIOGNIER	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	92

\*This impressive estate continues to build on its recent successes with a bevy of delicious red, white, and rosé wines. It also offers an extensive education in the varietal character of some of the more obscure, but important grapes found in southern France and Italy. The screw cap-finished **2004 Vermentino** (called Rolle in France) is a delicious, crisp, minty offering displaying plenty of acidity as well as fruit. Completely fermented and aged in tank, with no malolactic, it should be consumed over the next 12 months. The fruit-driven, elegant **2004 Côtes de Tablas Blanc**, a blend of 55% Viognier, 29% Marsanne, and the rest Grenache Blanc and Roussanne, is a crisp, elegant white offering notions of lemon zest, grapefruit, oranges, and other tropical fruits. With good underlying acidity as well as surprising body and intensity, it will drink well for several more years. Even better is the **2004 Grenache Blanc** (perhaps the only Grenache Blanc that exists in California). At 15.3% alcohol, it's a pretty hefty wine, but you would never know that when tasting it. Elegant, with notes of white peaches and orange marmalade, it comes across like an exotic, tank-fermented and aged French Chablis. Drink this distinctive, singular white over the next year or two. I loved it! A luxury proprietary blend of Rhône Ranger varietals, the **2004 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc** is composed of 65% Roussanne, 30% Grenache, and 5% Picpoul. Tipping the scales at nearly 15% alcohol, it is a honeyed marmalade, rose water, and tropical fruit-scented white offering superb definition, richness, and headiness. This stunning effort will drink beautifully with grilled fish or shellfish dishes. Another Chablis-like offering, the **2004 Antithesis** is a 250-case cuvee of tank-fermented Chardonnay exhibiting crisp acidity, lemon oil, peach, and apricot notes, surprising full-bodied intensity, and loads of fruit in an un-oaked, virginal style. Drink it over the next 2-3 years.

The beautiful **2005 Viognier** reveals exotic litchi nut, peach, apricot, and honeysuckle notes, good definition, and more minerality than most California Viogniers. A barrel sample of the **2005 Côtes de Tablas Blanc** (42% Viognier, 33% Roussanne, 19% Marsanne, and 6% Grenache Blanc) offers lovely notes of honeysuckle, orange peel, and other tropical fruits in its medium to full-bodied, stylish personality. Notions of citrus, hazelnuts, fruit, and oak emerge from the rich **2005 Roussanne**. Once again, I loved the **2005 Grenache Blanc**, which exhibits a pungent, crisp, floral nose of white currants, peaches, and flowers. Crisp acidity buttresses this powerful, rich, surprisingly intense wine. The beautiful, medium to full-bodied, exotic, distinctive **2005 Picpoul** (is there another Picpoul made in the USA?) smells of quince, mint, white currants, and apricots. Another beauty, the **2005 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc** boasts tremendous power, richness, intensity, and definition. This 1,350-case cuvee is a blend of 70% Roussanne, 25% Grenache Blanc, and 5% Picpoul. It should drink well for 4-5 years. The two leanest, steeliest, and most mineral-dominated 2005s include the **2005 Vermentino**, with

its lemon/lime-like bouquet and Muscadet-on-steroids-like style, and the **2005 Antithesis**, a tank-fermented and aged, full-bodied Chardonnay. Perhaps the finest Chardonnay Tablas Creek has yet produced, it was put through full malolactic, and has great texture, weight, and richness, but no hint of wood. I wish more California wineries would take this approach.

One of my favorite California rosés is Tablas Creek's. Their powerful, light ruby-hued **2005 Rosé** (an 800-case blend of 60% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache, and 10% Counoise) possesses good underlying acidity along with plenty of blue and red fruit aromas as well as flavors. With respect to the red wines, the **2004 Côtes de Tablas** (64% Grenache, 16% Syrah, 13% Counoise, and 7% Mourvèdre) exhibits lovely strawberry and cherry fruit as well as notions of herbs, pepper, and earth. This medium-bodied, crisp, Côtes du Rhône-like cuvée possesses more weight than most of its French counterparts. Consume it over the next 2-5 years. I have never been as impressed with Tablas Creek's 100% Syrah, but the **2004 Syrah** is certainly very good. A cool climate effort resembling a mid-weight Crozes-Hermitage, it offers up herbal, peppery, black cherry, and currant notes. Drink it over the next 4-5 years. The outstanding clone of the famed Châteauneuf du Pape Beaucastel, the **2004 Esprit de Beaucastel** is a combination of 50% Mourvèdre, 27% Syrah, 17% Grenache, and 6% Counoise. There are 3,500 cases of this beauty, which exhibits peppery, earthy, gamy, meaty characteristics intermixed with black cherry, cassis, and new saddle leather. Dense, rich, spicy, and exuberant, impressively made as well as well-balanced, it can be drunk over the next decade. The red luxury cuvée, which represents Tablas Creek's version of the famed Hommage à Jacques Perrin, is the **2004 Panoplie**, a blend of 69% Mourvèdre, 21% Grenache, 7% Syrah, and 3% Counoise. Sadly, there are only 300 cases of this seriously endowed, muscular offering. Complex, multifaceted aromatics of smoked meats, poultry, earth, loamy soil, blackberry, cassis, and pepper are followed by a wine with impressive richness, muscle, and depth. Beautifully put together with superb concentration, it should age nicely for 10-12 years or more.

Lastly, Tablas Creek produces two Vin de Paille cuvées. The **2004 Vin de Paille** (13% alcohol), a blend of 39% Roussanne, 31% Grenache Blanc, 18% Viognier, and 12% Marsanne, exhibits copious quantities of honeysuckle, marmalade, and nut-like characteristics as well as plenty of body, unctuousness, richness, and residual sugar (146 grams per liter). It is an impressive sweet white. Made from 100% Mourvèdre, the **2003 Vin de Paille Sacre Rouge** offers dynamite notes of blueberries, tree bark, chocolate, and mocha along with excellent structure and power. It would be an exhilarating wine to drink with chocolate-based desserts. It's hard to know how long these wines will live."

