

TABLAS CREEK	2006	ANTITHESIS (CHARDONNAY)	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(91-93)
TABLAS CREEK	2005	CÔTES DE TABLAS	PASO ROBLES	RED	90
TABLAS CREEK	2004	CÔTES DE TABLAS	PASO ROBLES	RED	89
TABLAS CREEK	2006	CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(87-89)
TABLAS CREEK	2005	CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	90
TABLAS CREEK	2005	ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL	PASO ROBLES	RED	(92-94)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL	PASO ROBLES	RED	92
TABLAS CREEK	2006	ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(92-95)
TABLAS CREEK	2005	ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	93
TABLAS CREEK	2006	GRENACHE BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(88-90)
TABLAS CREEK	2005	GRENACHE BLANC	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	90
TABLAS CREEK	2005	MOURVÈDRE	PASO ROBLES	RED	87
TABLAS CREEK	2005	PANOPLIE	PASO ROBLES	RED	(94-96)
TABLAS CREEK	2004	PANOPLIE	PASO ROBLES	RED	95
TABLAS CREEK	2006	ROSÉ	PASO ROBLES	ROSÉ	90
TABLAS CREEK	2006	ROUSSANNE	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(90-92)
TABLAS CREEK	2005	ROUSSANNE	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	90
TABLAS CREEK	2005	SYRAH	PASO ROBLES	RED	90
TABLAS CREEK	2006	VERMENTINO	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	89
TABLAS CREEK	2005	VIN DE PAILLE	PASO ROBLES	SWEET DESSERT	90
TABLAS CREEK	2005	VIN DE PAILLE QUINTESSENCE	PASO ROBLES	SWEET DESSERT	94
TABLAS CREEK	2006	VIIGNIER	PASO ROBLES	WHITE	(90-92)

"In partnership with the renowned importer, Robert Haas of Vineyard Brands, Tablas Creek is France's Perrin family's (of Château Beaucastel fame) California project. They were one of the first owners to plant on the steep limestone hillsides west of Highway 101, at elevations that approach 1,600 feet. Much like their French counterparts, these wines possess a distinctive minerality. While Tablas Creek makes some varietal-based cuvées, their finest wines are blends, whether white or red. The introductory white is the **Côtes de Tablas Blanc**. The **2005**, a blend of 42% Viognier, 33% Roussanne, 19% Marsanne, and the rest white Grenache, offers up aromas of honeyed grapefruit, orange rind, tropical fruits, and lemon zest along with a hint of crushed rocks. Medium to full-bodied with surprising dryness as well as intensity, it should be consumed over the next 2-3 years. The **2005 Grenache Blanc** exhibits orange blossom and lemon oil notes along with a crisp acidity. It is one of the few successful white Grenaches made in California. Another enticing white is the stunning **2005 Roussanne**, which offers terrific fruit, good acidity, and excellent freshness. Rose water-like notes intermixed with smoke, flower, and waxy citrus scents emerge from this full-bodied effort. This cuvée spends some time in barrel. Even better is the **2005 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc**, a combination of 70% Roussanne and the rest mostly Grenache Blanc and a touch of Picpoul that sees no new oak. It reveals classic notes of honeyed marmalade, intense tropical fruits, impressive underlying minerality, and a chalky character in its big, full-throttle personality that is bursting with character as well as intensity.

The staff at Tablas Creek is extremely high on what it has achieved in 2006. For example, the **2006 Côtes de Tablas Blanc** (59% Viognier, 32% Marsanne, and the rest Grenache Blanc and Roussanne) reveals plenty of citrus, lemon oil, rose petal, anise seed, and earthy characteristics. It should be almost as good as the 2005. The **2006 Grenache Blanc** does not possess the weight of its 2005 counterpart, but it exhibits attractive custardy, lemon oil, hazelnut, honeysuckle, and orange peel-like notes. The big, bold, flamboyant **2006 Roussanne** displays plenty of complexity in its bouquet of candle wax, citrus oil, marmalade, and mango fruit. Elegant, full-bodied, and rich, it should be consumed with grilled fish or roast chicken dishes. Beautiful notes of orange blossoms, lemon oil, assorted tropical fruits, white currants, rose water, and spice emerge from the **2006 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc** (60% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, and 10% Picpoul). Full-bodied, rich, intense, dry, and stony in its minerality, this superb dry white should age nicely for 4-5 years or longer. Few California Viogniers exhibit as much minerality and chalkiness as Tablas Creek's **2006 Viognier**. Atypically mineral in its personality, it possesses excellent definition as well as notions of tropical fruits, peaches, and apricot jam. Enjoy it over the next several years. The complex **2006 Antithesis Chardonnay** may turn out to be even better than the 2005. Steely notes of citrus oil, honeyed grapefruit, and white currants are present in this crisp, zesty medium to full-bodied white. Beautifully pure fruit is unobstructed by new oak. One of Tablas Creek's tastiest efforts is their **2006 Vermentino** (called Rolle in southern France). Light, delicious, and crisp with hints of lemon zest and underripe apricots, it is a fresh, lively white that hits the palate with surprising personality as well as intensity. The overall impression is one of lightness and freshness despite its 14.5% alcohol.

Tablas Creek continues to fashion one of California's boldest and most innovative rosés. Made primarily from Mourvèdre, with touches of Grenache and Counoise, the **2006 Rosé** offers up aromas of plums, figs, earth, red currants, and strawberries. This full-bodied, dry, heady rosé can stand up to full-flavored food given its strong personality and beautiful fruit.

A knock-out example of an old style rosé made in a modern winery, it should provide plenty of pleasure over the next 12 months.

I re-tasted a few of the 2004 reds, and the medium-bodied **2004 Côtes de Tablas** (60% Grenache and 40% Syrah and Mourvèdre) exhibits lovely peppery, berry fruit, roasted herb, and gamy scents. It is a top-notch example of a California version of a Côtes du Rhône. The **2004 Esprit de Beaucastel**, a blend of 50% Mourvèdre, 27% Syrah, 17% Grenache, and 6% Counoise, is a beautifully complex effort (3,500 cases produced) displaying a dense ruby/purple color as well as a sumptuous perfume of earthy black cherries and cassis intermixed with new saddle leather, roasted meat, and Provençal herbs. With great intensity, medium to full body, and silky tannin, it tastes like top-notch southern Rhône. This broadly-flavored red should age well for at least a decade. The **2004 Panoplie** is a blend of 69% Mourvèdre, 21% Grenache, and the rest mostly Syrah with a touch of Counoise. This wine is showing fabulously well out of bottle, with complex earthy, gamy, smoky notes of burning embers and charcoal as well as black cherry and black currant fruit. The wine is broad, full-bodied, powerful, and rich. It is a beautiful homage to the famed luxury cuvée called Jacques Perrin from Château Beaucastel. This wine should evolve for at least 12-15 more years.

The **2005 Côtes de Tablas** is better than the 2004. This blend of 43% Grenache, 24% Mourvèdre, 18% Syrah, and the rest Counoise, shows complex notes of soy, roasted meat, black cherry, currant, resin, and roasted herbs. Spicy, rich, broad, and quite full-bodied, this is a serious and well-endowed wine reminiscent of a top-flight Côtes du Rhône from southern France. The **2005 Syrah** is a big improvement over the 2004 and reminded me of a meaty, roasted, earthy, and mineral-dominated Cornas from France's northern Rhône. Deep ruby, the wine shows pepper, minerals, and black fruits. Drink it over the next 7-8 years. The **2005 Mourvèdre** reveals smoky bacon and meaty notes, hints of fresh mushrooms, a touch of chocolate, and a penetrating, tannic mouthfeel with some angularity. It's not for everybody, but it is an interesting wine and much better than the more herbal/vegetal 2004. The **2005 Esprit de Beaucastel** looks sensational. A blend of 44% Mourvèdre, 26% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and the rest Counoise, this wine has a dense ruby/purple color, a beautiful nose of incense, melted licorice, roasted herbs, pepper, smoked meats, and black fruits. It hits the palate with substantial authority yet shows impressive definition to buttress its striking richness, muscle, and depth. This is a gorgeously proportioned wine that should drink beautifully for 15 or more years. As one might expect, the concentration level and aromatics soar in the **2005 Panoplie**, a blend of 70% Mourvèdre, 25% Grenache, and 5% Syrah. Beautifully melted licorice, black truffle, and roasted meat notes interwoven with pepper, cassis, blackberry, and herbs are present in this wine, which has exquisite concentration, seamless integration of acidity, tannins, and alcohol, and a fabulous finish close to 50+ seconds long. This is a stunner that should drink beautifully for 15 or more years.

Two sweet wines tasted included the **2005 Vin de Paille**, made from a blend of Roussanne, Grenache Blanc, Viognier, and Marsanne. An amazing nose of black truffles followed by marmalade and honeyed tea notes jumps from the glass of this full-bodied wine that carries its 10% alcohol very gracefully. The other knock-out wine was the **2005 Vin de Paille Quintessence**, which is unctuously textured, full-bodied, rich, thick, and juicy, with loads of glycerin, and plenty of honeyed orange, peach, and syrupy marmalade-like notes. A high level of residual sugar and a good 12-13% alcohol give this wine plenty of punch, power, and potential longevity. It should last for at least 20 years if not longer." Tel: 805.237.1231