

## Tablas Creek Vineyard

By Josh Raynolds

NOV / DEC 09

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Vermentino Paso Robles**

(\$27) Greenish gold. Lively aromas of lime zest, honeysuckle and wet stone, with a delicate overlay of herbs. Dry, nervy and focused, offering slightly tart citrus and orchard fruit flavors and a good lashing of salty minerality. Very refreshing wine, with the nerviness to work with raw mollusks. **88**

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Cotes de Tablas Blanc Paso Robles**

(\$25; 42% viognier, 26% roussanne, 21% marsanne and 11% grenache blanc) Bright gold. Mineral-driven aromas of lemon, apple and peach pit, plus a strong note of gingerbread. Less exotic than the viognier content would suggest, offering taut citrus and orchard fruit flavors and good mineral snap. Finishes with an echo of peach and very good clarity and persistence. **90**

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Bergeron Paso Robles**

(\$27; 100% roussanne) Greenish gold. Highly perfumed bouquet of dusty citrus peel, white peach and quinine, with a subtle floral overtone. Bright, spicy citrus flavors gain sweetness and depth with aeration and are complemented by notes of sweet butter and dusty minerals. Suavely blends energy and depth, finishing with refreshing mineral bite and spicy persistence. **90**

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Picpoul Blanc Paso Robles**

(\$27) Bright gold. Exotic aromas of pineapple, mango and flowers. Juicy and round, with good cut to the white peach and tropical fruit flavors. Finishes with gentle acidity and good spicy length. How many New World versions are there of this southern European variety? **88**

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Grenache Blanc Paso Robles**

(\$27) Light, bright yellow. Highly floral aromas of apple, pear and yellow plum, with a stony undercurrent. Chewy pit fruit flavors are enlivened by zesty citrus and pear skin notes, which add a refreshingly bitter quality. Blends richness and vivacity smoothly, with strong finishing notes of peach and lemon zest. **89**

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Roussanne Paso Robles**

(\$27) Green-edged yellow. Hugely aromatic bouquet shows musky tropical fruit and melon scents, along with strong spice and floral qualities. Mango and honeydew flavors are underscored by dusty minerals and gain sweetness with air. The finish clings with authority and echoes the mango and mineral notes. **90**

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc Paso Robles**

(\$40; 68% roussanne, 22% grenache blanc and 10% picpoul) Light, bright gold. Pungently floral aromas of lime, lemongrass and green apple, with notes of dusty minerals and honey. Deep citrus flavors are firmed by gentle chalk and white pepper qualities and show a strong tangerine note. Tangy and refreshing on the finish, leaving behind sweet citrus and mineral notes. This wine is really lively for a southern Rhone white blend. **92**

### **2008 Tablas Creek Vineyard Rose Paso Robles**

(\$27; 58% mourvedre, 32% grenache and 10% counoise) Bright pink. Pungent aromas of raspberry, cherry and dried rose. A tangy note of blood orange adds vivacity to the sweet red berry flavors, with dusty minerality adding back-end cut and lift. Very fresh wine with a tangy finish featuring a strong echo of blood orange. This could stand up to some of the best pink wines from southern France. **90**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Cotes de Tablas Rouge Paso Robles**

(\$25; 50% grenache and 25% each of syrah and counoise) Vivid red. Seductively perfumed bouquet of black raspberry, cherry preserves, smoked meat and potpourri. Exotic, seductively sweet red and dark berry flavors are complemented by candied flowers and spicecake. Smooth and seemingly tannin-free, with strong finishing sweetness and fruity persistence. **90**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Grenache Paso Robles**

(\$35) Deep, bright red. Exotic, highly aromatic nose features red and dark berry compote, incense, lavender and Asian spices. Deep, lush and sweet, offering a compelling array of juicy red fruit flavors and a richer note of boysenberry. A tangy mineral quality adds vibrancy and helps to extend the long, sappy, focused finish. **92**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Mourvedre Paso Robles**

(\$35; includes 10% syrah) Saturated ruby. Pungent aromas of cherry skin, smoked meat, dried rose and tobacco. Shows sweeter red fruits on the palate, along with a seductive floral pastille quality. The cherry note builds with air and resonates on the long, sappy, focused finish, which features velvety tannins. **91**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Syrah Paso Robles**

(\$35; includes 10% grenache) Inky ruby. Deep, smoky aromas of cassis, cherry-cola and candied violet. Smoky dark fruit flavors are framed by supple tannins and enlivened by tangy minerals and a note of candied violet. The tannins gain strength on the finish, lending a youthfully taut quality, but aeration quickly brings the fruit back up. Give this some air or a few more years in the cellar. **91**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard En Gobelet Paso Robles**

(\$40; 48% mourvedre, 47% grenache and 5% tannat, all from head-pruned vines) Bright red. High-pitched red berries and Asian spices on the nose, with notes of potpourri and blood orange adding complexity. Smells a lot like pinot noir and tastes like one too, offering sweet strawberry and raspberry flavors and a refreshing snap of smoky minerals. The floral note repeats on the finish, which is sappy, focused and impressively persistent. **92**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Paso Robles**

(\$50; 44% mourvedre, 29% grenache, 21% syrah and 6% counoise) Vivid red. Impressively complex bouquet melds raspberry, cherry pit, cassis and incense, with smoky Indian spice and herbal qualities adding complexity. Rich, palate-coating red and dark berry preserve flavors verge on decadent but are nicely framed by velvety tannins. A sweet floral note come up with air and carries through the strikingly long, juicy and spicy finish. I'd serve this powerful, deeply fruity wine with braised lamb. **94**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Panoplie Paso Robles**

(\$95; a blend of 60% mourvedre, 30% grenache and 10% syrah) Saturated ruby. Intensely perfumed nose suggests strawberry and raspberry preserves, rose, incense and minerals. Sappy, sweet and penetrating, offering pure red fruit flavors and a tangy note of singed orange. The polar opposite of the "basic" Esprit, emphasizing strong mineral-laden character and graceful floral qualities. As mouthfilling and powerful as this wine is, it also displays a delicacy and precision that I would never expect from this region. I'd have no hesitation serving this alongside some of the big guns of the 2007 vintage from the southern Rhone. **95**

#### **2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Tannat Paso Robles**

(\$35) Inky purple. Highly expressive nose, especially for this normally brooding variety: sexy boysenberry and blueberry complicated by licorice and black cardamom. Smooth and sweet, offering inky dark fruit flavors and solid, chewy tannins that become more dominant with air. The finish features a note of bitter chocolate and clings with very good tenacity. **90**

**2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Vin de Paille Sacrerouge Paso Robles (half bottle)**

(\$45; late-harvested, air-dried mourvedre) Inky purple. Wild, pungent aromas of dried red and dark berries, cherry skin and cracked pepper. A touch volatile at first but settles down to offer sweet raspberry and cherry flavors, with tangy acidity adding vibrancy. Port-like in its flavors but not heavy, finishing with very good clarity and a resonating note of red berry preserves. **92**