

## Tablas Creek Vineyard

By Josh Reynolds

“Jason Haas and his winemaker/vineyard manager Neal Collins told me that they're particularly excited about exploring the potential for varieties outside the traditional Rhône palette that they helped establish in Paso Robles. There's a bottling of petit manseng made here now, which joins the tannat, picpoul and vermentino as alien varietal wines at this pioneering winery. 'Who knows what will actually turn out to work best here?' Haas asked rhetorically. 'It's pretty humbling to be considered the old-timer when you've only been set up for about 25 years. In historic wine terms, that's the blink of an eye.' This year's set of releases includes a new bottling, Patelin, that comes in both a red and a white version and includes some purchased fruit. These are now the entry-level bottlings here, which allows the Côtes de Tablas wines to be pushed up the cellar hierarchy and be given higher-quality fruit than before. According to Collins, 'the Côtes de Tablas wines were always too serious to be considered the basic wines, and now we hope that they'll be taken for what they are, not looked at simply as the low end of the collection.'

### **2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Vermentino Paso Robles** 90

Green-tinged straw. High-pitched aromas of pear, candied lemon and mango, with slow-building spiciness. Very fresh and sappy, with deep but lithe orchard and tropical fruit flavors framed by bracing acidity. The tangy finish features lingering spiciness. This would work well with rich or lighter foods.

### **2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Patelin de Tablas Blanc Paso Robles** 89

(50% grenache blanc, 33% viognier, 10% roussanne and 7% marsanne; made from a blend of estate-grown and purchased fruit): Bright yellow. Fresh lemon and pear aromas are complemented by notes of green almond and white pepper. Focused and racy, offering spicy citrus pith and orchard fruit flavors and a hint of bitter quinine. Finishes on a dry, stony note, with very good tangy length. This is a really impressive freshman effort.

### **2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Côtes de Tablas Blanc Paso Robles** 90

(54% viognier, 30% grenache blanc, 8% marsanne and 8% roussanne): Bright yellow-gold. Fresh melon and peach on the fragrant nose. A juicy, energetic midweight that offers fresh honeydew and pit fruit flavors and a hint of candied orange. Finishes smooth, spicy and very long, leaving notes of fresh flowers and white pepper behind.

### **2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Grenache Blanc Paso Robles** 91

Light yellow. Lemon curd, yellow plum and candied ginger on the fragrant nose. Broad, spicy and vibrant, with a spicy character and noteworthy verve to its pit fruit flavors. Rich and substantial but lithe, with a long finish that's taut and well-focused. Shows admirable delicacy and cut for a New World version of this variety.

### **2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Picpoul Blanc Paso Robles** 88

Light yellow. Ripe pear and yellow plum aromas and flavors show a resinous quality and a touch of bitter herbs. Chewy and broad, with a gentle citrus note on the back end adding lift and cut. Packs a punch but shows good vivacity and finishes with good length and a touch of warmth.

### **2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Marsanne Paso Robles** 90

Light, green-tinged yellow. Complex, spice-accented bouquet evokes green apple, quince and white flowers. Juicy and precise, with good depth to its fresh orchard fruit flavors. Shows a refreshingly bitter quality on the finish, which clings with impressive authority. For a New World rendition of marsanne this wine shows impressive delicacy.

### **2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Roussanne Paso Robles** 91

Bright yellow-gold. Fresh orange and pear aromas are complicated by dusty minerals and white flowers. Silky in texture, with good energy and focus to the zesty citrus and orchard fruit flavors. Spiciness builds on the nervy, very persistent finish.



- 2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc Paso Robles** 93  
 (60% roussanne, 35% grenache blanc and 5% picpoul blanc): Light, bright gold. Complex, intensely perfumed scents of fresh pear, nectarine, licorice and smoky minerals. Sappy, palate-staining pit fruit and citrus flavors show a compelling blend of richness and vivacity and gain sweetness in the middle. Big and broad but very lively, finishing with excellent clarity and spicy persistence.
- 2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Antithesis Paso Robles** 90  
 (100% chardonnay): Bright yellow. Powerful aromas of poached pear, melon and white flowers, with a hint of anise. Juicy and deeply pitched, with very good focus to its orchard and citrus fruit flavors. Finishes smooth and sappy, with echoing pear and floral notes. Very elegant chardonnay with the balance to age.
- 2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Petit Manseng Paso Robles** 91  
 (picked at 26 degrees Brix, with a very low pH of 3.1): Green-tinged gold. Ripe melon, peach and honey on the nose, with a hint of candied ginger adding lift. Broad and sappy, showing good depth to its melon and candied pit fruit flavors. Finishes smooth and gently sweet, leaving behind persistent floral and peach nectar notes. This intriguing wine finished with 50 g/l residual sugar and 13.5% alcohol, but it doesn't show any cloying character. It would be fantastic with a cheese course or with spicy foods, even fruit desserts.
- 2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Patelin de Tablas Paso Robles** 90  
 (39% syrah, 36% grenache, 22% mourvèdre and 3% counoise): Bright purple. Highly expressive aromas of raspberry, mulberry and licorice, with a spicy overtone. Juicy and focused, offering lively, focused flavors of red fruits and anise complicated by a touch of bitter chocolate. Finishes clean and nervy, with lingering raspberry and violet notes.
- 2009 Tablas Creek Vineyard Côtes de Tablas Rouge Paso Robles** 91  
 (43% grenache, 24% syrah, 18% counoise and 15% mourvèdre): Vivid ruby-red. Lively red fruits on the nose, with strong mineral and floral qualities contributing vivacity. Fresh and silky, with spice-accented bitter cherry and raspberry flavors lifted by tangy acidity. The sweet, precise feature shows repeating raspberry and cherry notes.
- 2009 Tablas Creek Vineyard Grenache Paso Robles** 91  
 Bright ruby. Fragrant, precise aromas of fresh raspberry, flowers and Asian spices, along with a hint of anise. Zesty and tightly wound on entry but aeration brings up sappy raspberry and cherry flavors brightened by zesty minerality. Finishes with very good cut and juicy persistence, repeating the spicy note. This seamless wine is delicious right now.
- 2009 Tablas Creek Vineyard En Gobelet Paso Robles** 93  
 (56% mourvèdre, 23% tannat and 21% grenache): A highly perfumed, kaleidoscopic bouquet evokes candied red and dark berries, potpourri and incense, plus a hint of roasted coffee. Broad, pliant and deeply pitched but lively, with a velvety texture to the raspberry and mulberry flavors. The palate-staining finish shows outstanding clarity and lingering spiciness.
- 2009 Tablas Creek Vineyard Tannat Paso Robles** 91  
 Dark ruby. Inky, concentrated cherry and cassis aromas complicated by notes of licorice, black pepper and violet. Spicy and energetic on the palate but also dense and chewy, with bitter cherry and blackcurrant flavors that really grip the palate. Finishes smoky, sweet and long, with strong but harmonious tannins adding structure.
- 2009 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Paso Robles** 93  
 (40% mourvèdre, 28% syrah, 27% grenache and 5% counoise): Vivid ruby-red. Sexy, highly perfumed aromas of candied raspberry, potpourri, Asian spices, sandalwood and licorice, with zesty minerality emerging with aeration. Suave, fresh and lithe, showing impressive definition and florality to its seamless red fruit flavors. The spicy, very long finish features gentle tannins and a flavor of red raspberry. A very polished blend.
- 2009 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Panoplie Paso Robles** 95  
 (65% mourvèdre, 26% grenache and 9% syrah): Deep ruby with a bright rim. Floral- and spice-accented aromas of red and dark berries, incense and minerals expand with aeration, picking up a smoky quality. Impressively fresh and pure on the palate, with excellent depth to its sweet raspberry, cherry and floral pastille flavors. Finishes sappy and nervy, with lively notes of candied flowers and star anise. Has the balance to age, but this is also flat-out delicious right now.”

