

There's a new varietal wine at Tablas Creek this year, the rare Terret Noir, one of the thirteen permitted grapes for Châteauneuf-du-Pape, which pushes the number of those varieties bottled from this iconic producer's 120 acres of vineyards to nine. The style continues to push toward greater finesse, which is no easy feat in this hot region, but winemaker Neil Collins and his team have proven more than able to pull it off with impressive consistency. The oak presence in the wines is restrained and tannins are always well-managed, which makes for ease of drinking on the young side but these bottlings possess the depth and balance to reward patience.

*Josh Reynolds – September 2016*

**2014 Roussanne** Vivid straw. High-pitched Meyer lemon and green apple scents are complicated by deeper notes of melon and honey. Dry and racy on the palate, offering nervy citrus fruit and bitter quinine flavors and a hint of tarragon. Finishes on a repeating floral note, delivering strong mineral bite and citrus-fruit-driven persistence. **91** points.

**2014 Esprit de Tablas Blanc** Light bright yellow. Smoky aromas of poached pear, honey and pungent flowers, backed by a hint of succulent herbs. Pliant and sappy in the mouth, offering subtly sweet orchard and pit fruit flavors and a refreshing jolt of bitter citrus pith. Deftly combines power and finesse and closes sappy, gently sweet and impressively long, leaving a suave pear nectar note behind." **93** points.

**2015 Vermentino** Bright straw. Ripe melon and pear aromas and flavors are complemented by hints of lemon peel, succulent herbs and white pepper. Silky and open-knit, showing good depth and breadth as well as focus. The melon note repeats strongly on the juicy finish, which clings with strong tenacity. In a generous style for the variety, but in no way lacking vivacity. **90** points.

**2015 Clairette Blanche** (raised entirely in stainless steel tanks) Pale green-tinged yellow. Musky citrus and pit fruit aromas show very good clarity and a touch of smoky minerality. Chewy and broad on the palate, offering fresh pear and white peach flavors and a deeper suggestion of honey. Closes on a spicy note, delivering strong thrust and fruit-driven persistence. **90** points.

**2015 Patelin de Tablas Blanc** Pale yellow. Anjou pear and tangerine on the incisive, mineral-tinged nose. Silky, taut and focused, offering lemon pith, green apple and honeysuckle flavors and a touch of fennel. Closes with firm grip and very good, tangy persistence, leaving floral and orchard fruit notes behind. **90** points.

**2015 Côtes de Tablas Blanc** Light bright yellow. Smoky aromas of poached pear, honey and pungent flowers, accompanied by a hint of succulent herbs in the background. Pliant and sappy in the mouth, offering subtly sweet orchard and pit fruit flavors and a refreshing jolt of bitter citrus pith. Closes with very good energy, clarity and persistence, leaving a suave floral note behind. **91** points.

**2015 Grenache Blanc** Green-hued yellow. Highly perfumed, nervy aromas of fresh citrus and orchard fruits are complicated by suggestions of white flowers and smoky minerals. Sappy Meyer lemon, pear and melon flavors show a suave floral quality and a spine of juicy acidity. Finishes silky and broad, featuring a resonating floral note and excellent persistence. **92** points.

**2015 Esprit de Tablas Blanc** Pale gold. Fresh lime, quince, white flowers and dusty minerals on the powerfully scented nose. Bright, sharply focused citrus and orchard fruit flavors stain the palate and are complemented by a suave honeysuckle quality. Racy and precise on the strikingly persistent finish, which leaves behind bitter citrus zest, mineral and floral notes. **(93-94)** points.

**2015 Patelin de Tablas Rosé** Limpid pink. Very fresh and sharply focused on the nose, displaying an array of lively citrus fruit and red berry qualities and a hint of white pepper that adds a spicy edge. Clean and nervy in style, offering bitter red currant and strawberry flavors and a touch of bitter orange zest. Closes tight and dry, with an echo of red berries and very good length. **90** points.

**2015 Dianthus** Neon pink. Ripe red fruit and floral scents, complicated by hints of white pepper and spicecake. Juicy, concentrated and incisive on the palate, offering sappy strawberry, red currant and rose pastille flavors lifted by a zesty mineral flourish. Finishes very long and floral, showing strong cut and spicy persistence. This impressively complex pink wine would work well on its own or with strongly flavored foods. **92** points.

**2013 Esprit de Tablas** Opaque ruby. Deep, smoke-accented aromas of red and blue fruits, candied flowers and cracked pepper convey a slow-building mineral quality. At once rich and energetic, offering intense black raspberry and boysenberry compote flavors given spine by juicy acidity. Finishes spicy and impressively long, with velvety tannins arriving late and adding gentle grip. **93** points.

**2013 Panoplie** Glass-staining ruby. Complex, explosive aromas of ripe red berries, incense, peppery spices and fresh flowers develop a smoky mineral quality with air. Juicy, densely packed and precise on the palate, offering sappy black raspberry, cherry compote and spicecake flavors that show a very suave blend of richness and finesse. Tightens up steadily on the extremely long, incisive finish, which is framed by subtle, fine-grained tannins. **95** points.

**2014 Patelin de Tablas** Brilliant red. High-pitched aromas of ripe red berries, cherry and fresh flowers; bright mineral and peppery spice scents build in the glass. Energetic and appealingly sweet, offering intense raspberry and lavender pastille flavors that are sharpened and lifted by tangy acidity. Silky tannins give shape to the clinging finish, which leaves notes of allspice and minerals behind. There's fabulous value here. **91** points.

**2014 Terret Noir** Pale red, almost dark pink. Vibrant, spice- and mineral-tinged aromas of red currant and strawberry slowly take on a

floral quality. Racy and refreshingly bitter, offering spicy red fruit and blood orange flavors and a touch of candied rose. Lithe and nervy, delivering firm closing bite and very good, spicy persistence. This wine reminded me a lot of a Tavel. **90** points.

**2014 Cunoise** Vivid ruby-red. Fresh raspberry and cherry on the nose, along with suave floral and spicecake flourishes and a hint of smoky minerals. Juicy and seamless in texture, offering appealingly sweet red fruit and lavender pastille flavors and a bracing jolt of tangy acidity. Seamless and focused on the lingering finish, which features supple tannins and repeating florality. **91** points.

**2014 Mourvèdre** Glass-staining ruby. Highly perfumed aromas of black raspberry, cherry pit and potpourri, joined by hints of woodsmoke and underbrush that come up with air. Juicy and precise; concentrated cassis, bitter cherry and floral pastille flavors deepen on the back half. Shows an appealing sweetness on the long, youthfully tannic finish, where the smoke and floral notes echo strongly. **92** points.

**2014 Syrah** Bright purple. Deep-pitched cherry compote and blackberry aromas, along with hints of cola, licorice and violet candy. Broad and fleshy on the palate, showing very good depth and a sappy quality to the dark berry, bitter cherry and floral pastille flavors. Impressively lively on the long, gently sweet finish, which features building tannins and resonating berry liqueur and cola notes. **92** points.

**2014 Tannat** Inky purple. Potent, smoke-tinged dark berry aromas are complemented by suggestions of cola, licorice and candied flowers. Fleshy and appealingly sweet on the palate, offering concentrated black raspberry, cassis and violet pastille flavors underscored by energizing spiciness. Shows very good balance and spicy lift on the impressively persistent finish, which is framed by smooth, harmonious tannins. This is the finest example of this variety that I have had from the New World and as good as virtually anything that I have tasted from Madiran as well. **92** points.

**2014 Pinot Noir Full Circle Haas Vineyard** (sourced from a two-acre block next to co-owner Robert Haas' house) Vivid ruby-red. Heady, mineral-laced aromas of ripe red and dark berries, allspice and candied rose. Sweet, nicely concentrated raspberry and rose pastille flavors show impressive vivacity and focus, and a spicecake nuance emerges slowly. The floral note repeats strongly on a very long, juicy finish, which is given shape by gentle, harmonious tannins. **92** points.

**2014 Côtes de Tablas** Bright ruby mineral-accented red fruit liqueur scents are complemented by suggestions of white pepper and candied flowers. Fleshy, seamless and gently sweet on the palate, offering juicy cherry and raspberry flavors underscored by a smoky mineral quality. Shows excellent clarity and spicy lift on the finish, which is given shape by smooth, harmonious tannins. The Grenache component is really showing itself right now. **92** points.

**2014 En Gobelet** Deep, brilliant red. Lively, mineral-accented cherry and red currant aromas, along with hints of tea rose and Asian spices. Taut and focused on entry, offering sappy cherry, red berry and spicecake flavors that deepen and become fleshier with air. Silky tannins give shape and gentle grip to the impressively long, focused finish, which leaves a note of candied flowers behind. This graceful

wine will age slowly and positively on its balance. **93** points.

**2014 Esprit de Tablas** Bright ruby-red. High-pitched red and dark berry scents display excellent clarity and pick up a hint of smokiness as the wine opens up. Juicy and focused on the palate; intense, appealingly sweet cherry, black raspberry and spicecake flavors show a suave blend of weight and vivacity. Finishes with impressive energy and cut, delivering dusty, late-arriving tannins and lingering spiciness. **(92-93)** points.

**2014 Panoplie** Vivid ruby-red. Ripe red fruits, potpourri, sandalwood and Asian spices on the powerfully scented nose; mineral and rhubarb flourishes add complexity and lift. Coats the palate with sappy raspberry, spicecake and violet pastille flavors that spread out and become sweeter with air. Impressively deep and broad, but there's superb energy to this wine as well. Supple tannins add shape and gentle grip to an impressively long, red-fruit- and floral-driven finish that shows no rough edges. This wine is shaping up to be a star of the vintage. **(94-95)** points.

**2015 Patelin de Tablas** Ruby-red. Displays seductive scents of fresh raspberry, candied flowers and star anise, accompanied by a suave floral overtone. Expansive red fruit liqueur flavors show very good depth, and suggestions of cracked pepper and smoky minerals provide lift and vivacity. The sweet, very persistent finish shows strong thrust and fruity cling, while smooth, slow-building tannins lend shape. **(90-92)** points.

**2015 Côtes de Tablas** Inky ruby. Ripe cherry, floral pastilles, black pepper and allspice on the perfumed nose. Densely packed, sweet and focused in the mouth, offering intense dark berry and bitter cherry flavors that slowly become sweeter with aeration. Shows very good energy and strong lift on the clinging, spicy finish, which is framed by youthfully chewy tannins. **(90-92)** points.

**2015 En Gobelet** Glass-staining ruby. Sexy, mineral-tinged red berry preserve and floral pastille scents are complemented by suggestions of star anise and woodsmoke. Seamless, expansive and sweet, offering deeply concentrated raspberry, cherry compote and spicecake flavors that are underscored and lifted by juicy acidity. Shows excellent clarity and energy on the finish, which features sneaky tannins and a suave candied lavender quality. I'd have guessed that the percentage of Grenache was higher here. **(92-94)** points.

**2015 Esprit de Tablas** Vivid ruby. Vibrant raspberry, violet and spicecake scents, along with suggestions of incense and smoky minerals. Stains the palate with energetic, sharply focused red berry liqueur and floral pastille flavors that are complemented by hints of star anise and bitter chocolate. Shows highly appealing sweetness and vivacity on the sweet, focused, gently tannic finish, which echoes the red berry and floral notes with gusto. **(92-94)** points.

**2015 Panoplie** Youthful violet. Heady, mineral- and spice-accented raspberry and boysenberry aromas are complicated by an exotic floral nuance and suggestions of star anise and allspice. Fleshy and broad on the palate, offering sweet, concentrated red and blue fruit flavors and a bracing jolt of peppery spices. Finishes sappy, focused and pure, displaying velvety tannins and a lingering echo of candied lavender. **(93-95)** points.

