

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD

CÔTES DE TABLAS 2003



The Tablas Creek Vineyard Côtes de Tablas is a blend of four estate-grown Rhône varietals: Grenache Syrah, Mourvedre and Counoise. Like most wines of the Southern Rhône, it is a blend of varietals, featuring the fruitiness of Grenache balanced by the meatiness of Mourvèdre and the spice and structure of Syrah. The 2003 Côtes de Tablas is Tablas Creek's fourth release of its Côtes de Tablas red blend, made in the style of a full-throttle Côtes du Rhone.

The 2003 vintage was tremendous: warm and sunny, with cool nights that prolonged the hangtime of the grapes and led to wines with excellent acidity. A relatively early flowering, combined with a warm but not overly hot summer produced unusually long hangtime, and grapes with concentrated flavors and a distinct minerality. Our first lots of Syrah came in on September 18th, followed by Grenache on September 25th, and Counoise and Mourvedre both on October 8th. The beautiful fall weather allowed us to bring in fruit when it was at peak ripeness, and allow other blocks to continue to mature. The harvest continued through October, with the last lot of Mourvedre safely in the cellar on October 29th.

All varietals were fermented in stainless steel with the use of native yeasts: the Syrah in open-top fermenters, punched down manually, and the other varietals in closed fermenters with pump-over aeration. After pressing, the wines were racked, blended, aged for a year in 1200-gallon French oak foudres, and then bottled in June 2004. The wines underwent only a light filtration before bottling.

The 2003 Côtes de Tablas is a rich, spicy wine, with a juicy, meaty nose of rare steak, pepper and blueberry. The flavors are juicy and rich, with ripe tannins and a finish laced with licorice.

TECHNICAL NOTES

60% Grenache
24% Syrah
12% Mourvèdre
4% Counoise

15.2% Alcohol by Volume

3000 Cases Produced

FOOD PAIRINGS

Grilled steaks
Pastas with meat sauces
Rich beef stews
Spicy sausages

