

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD

ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL 2006



TECHNICAL NOTES

45% Mourvèdre
28% Grenache
22% Syrah
8% Counoise

14.5% Alcohol by Volume
3500 Cases Produced

FOOD PAIRINGS

Game
Dark Fowl (i.e., duck)
Richly flavored stews
Lamb
Asian preparation of red meats (i.e., beef stir fry)

The Tablas Creek Vineyard *Esprit de Beaucastel* 2006 is a blend of four estate-grown varietals, propagated from budwood cuttings from the Château de Beaucastel estate. The wine is based on the dark red fruit, earth, spice and mid-palate richness of Mourvèdre, with additions of Grenache for forward fruit, approachability and lushness, Syrah for mineral, aromatics, and back-palate tannins, and Counoise for brambly spice and acidity. As with all our wines, the grapes for our *Esprit de Beaucastel* were grown on our 120-acre certified organic estate vineyard.

The 2006 vintage was a study of contrasts, with a cold, wet start, a very hot early summer, a cool late summer and a warm, beautiful fall. Ample rainfall in late winter gave the grapevines ample groundwater, and produced relatively generous crop sizes. The relatively cool late-season temperatures resulted in a delayed but unhurried harvest, wines with lower than normal alcohols, strong varietal character, and good acids.

The grapes were fermented using native yeasts in open and closed stainless steel fermenters. After pressing, the wines were moved into barrel, blended, and aged in 1200-gallon French oak foudres before being bottled in May 2008. The wine is unfinned and unfiltered.

The 2006 *Esprit de Beaucastel* is delicious and unusually approachable right now, with a complex nose of red plum, ripe cherry, fresh figs and candied orange peel, a velvety, layered palate with spicy plum and cherry fruit, pepper and nutmeg spices, and excellent breadth. The finish shows more mineral, plum, and spice, and a little gentle oak from the foudre aging. It is delicious now, if very young, and should evolve elegantly in bottle for 10-15 years or longer.

