

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD

ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL BLANC 2008



TECHNICAL NOTES

65% Roussanne
30% Grenache Blanc
5% Picpoul Blanc

13.5% alcohol by volume
1800 cases produced

FOOD PAIRINGS

Cooked shellfish (lobster, softshell crab, shrimp)
Roasted or grilled vegetables (eggplant, asparagus, peppers)
Foods cooked with garlic and olive oil
Rich fish dishes (i.e., salmon, swordfish)
Asian stir fry

The Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc 2008 is a blend of three estate-grown varietals, propagated from budwood cuttings from the Château de Beaucastel estate. Roussanne provides the core richness, minerality, and flavors of honey and spice, while Grenache Blanc adds green apple and anise flavors, a lush mouthfeel and bright acids. Picpoul Blanc completes the blend, adding a saline minerality and tropical notes.

The 2008 vintage was our second consecutive drought year, with yields further reduced by spring frosts. Berries and clusters were small, leading to excellent concentration. Ripening over the summer was gradual and harvest about a week later than normal. Crop sizes were similar to 2007 and about 20% lower than usual. The low yields and gradual ripening resulted in wines with good intensity, lower than normal alcohols and an appealing gentle minerality. Grenache Blanc was harvested between September 16th and October 3rd, Picpoul Blanc between September 22nd and October 10th, and Roussanne between September 30th and October 24th.

As with all our wines, the grapes for our Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc were grown on our 120-acre certified organic estate vineyard.

The fruit was whole cluster pressed, and fermented with native yeasts. The Roussanne was fermented in a balance of stainless steel fermenters, 60-gallon oak barrels, and one 1200-gallon foudre. The Grenache Blanc was fermented partially in stainless steel and also in one foudre, and the Picpoul Blanc was fermented in small neutral oak and stainless steel barrels. All the wines went through malolactic fermentation. After a very long fermentation, the varietals were blended in June and bottled in July 2009.

The 2008 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc shows aromas of honeycomb and white flowers lifted by savory notes of lemon thyme and tarragon. The mouth shows rich Roussanne flavors of ripe pear, honey and spice, a rich texture reminiscent of coconut and a long, dry, slightly tropical finish. More so than many vintages of Esprit Blanc, the 2008 should drink well when young but will also reward time in bottle. Expect it to shine for at least the next 6-8 years.

