

DIANTHUS 2017



TECHNICAL NOTES

49% Mourvedre
39% Grenache
12% Counoise

14.1% Alcohol by Volume
1500 Cases Produced

FOOD PAIRINGS

Salmon
Sushi
Anchovies
Sausages
Fried Chicken
Mediterranean tapas

The Tablas Creek Vineyard Dianthus 2017 is a blend of three estate-grown varietals, propagated from budwood cuttings from the Château de Beaucastel estate. The blend incorporates the rosé traditions of the southern Rhône, taking its Mourvèdre foundation from the solid, dry rosés of Bandol and incorporating the structure of skin contact from the rich, juicy Grenache-based Tavel. Dianthus -- in pre-2012 vintages called simply Rosé -- refers to a genus of flowering plants known for their deep pink blossoms and known colloquially to gardeners as “pinks”.

We take the grapes for our Dianthus from the oldest section of French-source vines at Tablas Creek. In 1994, two years after our French vines had been released from their USDA-mandated quarantine, we had propagated just enough to plant a few rows of each varietal on a hill overlooking our vine nursery. Over the next few years, we used cuttings from these plants to plant the rest of our vineyard. These few rows of high-quality vines ripen later than the rest of the vineyard, so we harvest the Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Counoise together and co-ferment them (on their skins) in a single stainless steel fermenter. After 48 hours, we draw about 800 gallons of juice off the blend, and ferment it dry away from the skins. These lots are then supplemented with saignées (bleedings) from other Mourvèdre and Grenache lots in the cellar.

The grapes for Dianthus were grown on our certified organic estate vineyard.

The 2017 vintage saw our drought end with a bang, as we received 43 inches of rain and saw our rainiest month ever in January. The wet soils delayed budbreak to a normal time frame, and produced such a healthy vineyard that we saw canopy sizes and cane lengths we hadn't seen in years. The summer began relatively cool, but was punctuated by two heat spikes, one in early July and the other in late August, that accelerated ripening and produced intense flavors. The resulting vintage shows the health of the vines with a combination of concentration and freshness, with bright acids framing powerful fruit.

Our 2017 Dianthus is an electric pink. The nose shows watermelon and strawberry fruit, mint, and sweet spice. The mouth is like biting into a ripe plum, complete with the burst of acid from the skin, the sweet fruit that follows, and a little welcome herbiness on the finish like lemon thyme. A little salty minerality comes out on the finish, with flavors of cranberry and spice. A rosé to convert people who think that pink wines can't be serious. Drink before the end of 2019.