

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



The VINformer
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Summer 2014

State of the Vineyard

Summer has come to the vineyard, in this most unusual weather year. We started the year off dry and warm, instead of the more typical cold and wet winter season. Then, in March, when it's usually drying out, it started raining. Our rainfall total for the winter was 10 inches, still a far cry from our norm of 25+ inches but so much better than the 2.5 inches we'd accumulated by late February.

Budbreak arrived two weeks earlier than normal, in mid-March, and we have been incredibly fortunate to have avoided a spring freeze. Late rain and early budbreak produced a rare combination of green hillsides and green vines in an environment where you typically have one or the other, but not both at the same time. The late rains have also meant that we didn't get much cover crop growth at the time of year when we typically see it.

We're working as hard as we can to get the cover crop turned under so that the biomass decomposes and enriches the soil, but because of our late start due to the late rain -- and our desire to get good cover crop growth to generate that biomass -- we're behind. Unfortunately, our sheep, alpacas, llama and donkeys were less use than normal in our weeding efforts this year. The late rain meant that there wasn't much for them to browse until March, and since our animal herd will happily eat the new shoots off the vines, the early budbreak forced us to move them to unplanted sections of the

See **VINEYARD**, page 3



Blending the 2013 Reds

Blending is always an exciting time. Up until that time, the different wine lots in the cellar have been viewed in terms of their potential, and we're looking at them principally in terms of the problems that they might present. One might not be through with fermentation. Another might be a little oxidized, or a little reduced. Yet another might still be spritzy. In each case, we're trying to round these component pieces into form so that we can make our evaluations on them and aim them at the appropriate wine. This period can last as long as six months, starting with harvest and not concluding until April.

Once the lots are behaving, blending can happen startlingly fast, and these components that we have been regarding as potential problems (or, if you prefer, as diamonds in the rough) can in a week become the young wines that we'll spend the next years or decades getting to know. In addition, that week provides our best opportunity yet to get to know the personality of the vintage and try it next to its predecessor for context.

When we blend, we start by blind tasting every lot from each varietal. This year, we had 14 Grenache lots, 12 Mourvèdre lots, 8 Syrah lots, 3 Counoise lots and 3 lots that we'd blended early in the fermentation process (including the Scruffy Hill lot that forms the base of our *En Gobelet* each year). Each lot is given a grade between 1 and 3, with 1 being the best. My notes from this year show many 1's and few 3's -- the sign of a good vintage and one that is polished enough to evaluate.

See **BLENDING**, page 3

Focus Varietal: Mourvèdre

Mourvèdre (more-vehd-ruh), with its meaty richness and wonderful longevity, forms the backbone of our *Esprit de Tablas*. Twenty-nine acres of our vineyard are devoted to Mourvèdre, representing the largest acreage of any of our grapes.

Early History

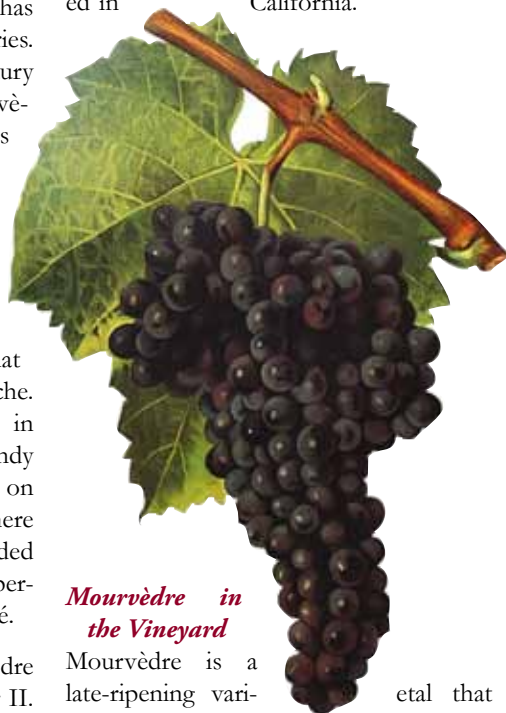
Mourvèdre is native to Spain, where it is known as Monastrell and is second only to Grenache in importance, but it has been a staple in the Rhône for centuries. Phylloxera's arrival in the late 19th century was particularly devastating to Mourvèdre. Whereas most Rhône varieties were easily matched with compatible rootstocks, Mourvèdre proved difficult to graft with the existing phylloxera-resistant rootstock. Thus, when the vineyards were replanted, most producers in Châteauneuf-du-Pape chose to replant with varieties that were easier to graft, such as Grenache. For decades, Mourvèdre was found in France almost exclusively in the sandy (and phylloxera-free) soil of Bandol, on the French Mediterranean coast, where it is bottled both as a red wine (blended with Grenache and Cinsault) and as perhaps the world's most coveted dry rosé.

Compatible rootstocks for Mourvèdre were developed only after World War II. Shortly thereafter, Jacques Perrin of Châteauneuf de Beaucastel led regeneration efforts in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and made Mourvèdre a primary grape in the red Beaucastel wines. Since the late 1960s, total plantings in Southern France have increased dramatically, but Beaucastel is still distinctive among Châteauneuf-du-Pape producers for using an unusually high percentage of Mourvèdre: up to 35% in some vintages.

Mourvèdre in the New World

Mourvèdre came to California as Mataro (likely named for the Catalan village where it originated) in the mid to late 1800s. In California it was probably first established in Santa Clara County, although the oldest

surviving vineyards are in Contra Costa County. Until recently, the grape was rarely bottled by itself, and was instead generally used as a component of field blends. The increasing popularity and prestige of Rhône varieties, the importation of higher-quality clones (in which Tablas Creek played a role) and a return to the French Mourvèdre name has given the varietal a new life. As of 2013, 1022 acres are planted in California.



Mourvèdre in the Vineyard

Mourvèdre is a late-ripening varietal that flourishes with hot summer temperatures. As such, it is beautifully suited to our climate at Tablas Creek, where its lateness in sprouting makes it less vulnerable to late spring frosts. In the vineyard, Mourvèdre is a

weight of the ripening grapes pulls the vines down like the spokes of an umbrella, providing the ripening bunches with ideal sun exposure. It is typically our last varietal to be harvested, often not coming into the cellar until early November.

Mourvèdre berries are moderate in size, medium-dark in color, with very thick skins. These thick skins are important because with its extremely late ripening, Mourvèdre is often still on the vines at the time of the first autumn rains. Its thick skins protect it from the swelling and splitting to which thinner-skinned grapes are susceptible.

Mourvèdre in the Cellar

Mourvèdre is relatively easy-going in the cellar, and can be successfully fermented both in open-top fermenters with punch-downs, and in closed-top fermenters with pump-overs. It is very well suited to aging in foudre, as it does not take particularly well to new oak, and does not show the same tendency toward reduction that Syrah does.

Mourvèdre is a wonderful blending component; its structure and mid-palate richness complement the openness, warmth and brighter acids of Grenache and the mineral, spice and tannin of Syrah. It blends successfully both in a leading role (as in Bandol, or our *Esprit de Tablas* and *Panoplie*) and in a supporting role in Grenache-based wines (as in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, or our *Côtes de Tablas*). In years when it gets fully ripe, it can also make a delicious single-varietal wine. We have bottled a varietal Mourvèdre most years since the 2003 vintage.

Flavors and Aromas

Wines made from Mourvèdre are intensely colored, rich and velvety with aromas of red fruit, chocolate/mocha, mint, leather, earth and game. They tend to be high in mid-palate tannin, and are well-suited to aging, although they are also often more approachable when young than the more overtly-tannic Grenache or Syrah. 🍷

Beaucastel is distinctive among Châteauneuf-du-Pape producers for using an unusually high percentage of Mourvèdre.

moderately vigorous varietal that does not require a great deal of extra care, though it can be prone to sunburn in heat spikes. The vines tend to grow vertically, making Mourvèdre an ideal candidate for head-training, although vines can also be successfully trellised. When head-trained, the

Once we've graded and discussed each lot, we start from the top, blending the *Panoplie* first from the lots that received consensus "1" grades and exceptional comments. We taste a handful of possible blends blind against one another until we agree. Once we're satisfied with the *Panoplie*, we remove the lots that we chose for it from our calculations and start the same process on the *Esprit*, and so forth through the *Côtes de Tablas* and our varietal wines and eventually to the estate lots that will go into our *Patelin de Tablas*.

Since each blend may contain 20 or more lots, each of which themselves might be composite blends of dozens of barrels, it takes the cellar a while to blend the wines we have to taste, and it's nearly impossible to make decisions on more than one tier a day. So, the seven blending days that we took this year is just about the minimum possible, and another sign that the components were in good shape for blending.

One of the things I was happiest with in blending the 2013 reds was the definition between the different blends, between the different varietals, and between the varietals and the blends that were led by those grapes. It's important to us that the *Côtes de Tablas* not taste too much like the varietal *Grenache* -- and that it not taste too much like the *Esprit* or the *Patelin*. This year, I think we nailed it: each varietal wine is a classic expression of its varietal characteristics, and each blend shows the signature of its leading grape but is, as we typically find, more than the sum of its parts. You can see the tasting notes for these wines, as well as my notes from our component tastings, on the blog: tablascreek.typepad.com

It will be a pleasure to get to know these wines over the coming years. 🍷



The final blends

Direct Shipping Update

We have received our shipping license for the great state of Montana! Montanans can now order wine or sign up for VINsider Wine Club membership. Still waiting for your state to become eligible for direct shipping? Get involved with Free the Grapes at www.freethegrapes.org.

property. Their impact there will still be beneficial, but even in a normal year there is a six-month stretch where they're exiled from the producing vineyard, so extending that term by additional months is unfortunate.

Budbreak (when the buds sprout) is the first of our annual milestones we look at that help us gauge the progress of each harvest. Flowering comes next. Veraison (marked by color change) comes in July or August, and typically means we're looking roughly 45 days to harvest. And, of course, first pick and last pick, at which point we've set the dates that will define our vintage.

Flowering, which began with Viognier on April 24th, provides our first good indicator of harvest dates, though there remains a great deal of variance that will be determined by the crop levels and our summer weather. The typical rule of thumb suggests 100 days from flowering to harvest, which we've found to typically be an underestimate in our cold-night climate. But figure a little under four months, and you're probably around an average for us. That suggests that we're looking at harvesting some of our early grapes (like Viognier) around late August, with the harvest unfolding after that.

The vineyard's health looks terrific, and the flowering (which can be disrupted by rain, excessive heat, or strong winds) seems to be proceeding under good conditions. The vines look healthy and even, the vigor seems surprisingly good given that last year was dry and this winter even moreso, and it's clear that our care in reducing crop levels preemptively last year has had positive benefits in the vines' health this year. From these early indications, we're expecting an early harvest, similar to last year's. If we can replicate 2013, we'll happily take it.

In the cellar, we've been bottling the 2012 reds and blending the 2013's, both reds and whites. The 2013 whites will be bottled later in the summer while the reds age in foudre until next spring. 🍷



Two Kids and a Cria

Eli and Sebastian Haas (ages 9 and 6) greet the newest member of the Tablas Creek family at the 2014 Wine Festival: a baby alpaca born May 16.

VINsider News: New Red-Only and White-Only Options

Beginning in fall 2014, we are excited to offer, in addition to our classic mix of red and white wines (and the occasional dry rosé) in each shipment, options for VINsider club members who prefer red-only and white-only shipments. Like our classic mix, the red-only and white-only options are selected from small-production lots, special blends, and sneak previews. Current VINsider Club members can select red-only or white-only options on the VINsider Update Form, and prospective new members can choose their preferred color mix when they register.

Please note that due to the limited supplies of our library wines, we cannot offer red-only or white-only options for our *Collector's Edition* shipments, although *Collector's Edition* members are welcome to choose red-only or white-only for their spring shipments.

If you have any questions about our different color mix options, please contact us at vinsider@tablascreek.com or 805.237.1231 x30.

Rosés Released!

Summer is here, and that means it's time to enjoy some delicious rosé wines! We've just released two for your drinking pleasure: the Grenache-based 2013 *Patelin de Tablas Rosé* and the Mourvèdre-based 2013 *Dianthus*.



Both were recently recommended by the Wine Spectator, which gave the *Patelin Rosé* an 88, describing it as having "a delicate style, with a light peach color and aromas of wild flowers and apricot, featuring crisp flavors of cantaloupe, watermelon and mineral" while the *Dianthus* topped their list at 91 points! Try them with all your summer meals!

Founding Families Honored

Both founding families of Tablas Creek have recently been recognized for their contributions to wine in the United States and abroad.

The venerable English wine magazine *Decanter* named Jean Pierre and Francois Perrin as their 2014 Men of the Year, celebrating their four decades of innovation and excellence in the wine industry. Bob Haas said it best in a blog post about the award: "I cannot think of any French wine family with better credentials."



On April 5th, Tablas Creek founder Robert Haas received the 2014 Rhone Rangers Lifetime Achievement Award for services to the American Rhone movement. It's a wonderful honor, just the second-ever lifetime achievement award that the organization has given out. The remarkable tribute video put together by the Rhone Rangers and debuted at the event is available on our blog.



TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



WINE ORDER FORM SUMMER 2014

DISCOUNTS

Wine Club members receive a discount of 25% on orders of 12 bottles or more and 20% on orders of fewer than 12 bottles. VINdependents receive a discount of 20% on orders of a case or more and 10% on orders of fewer than 12 bottles. Non-VINsiders receive a 10% discount on orders of 12 bottles or more.

SHIPPING

Shipping included on orders that include 6 or more bottles of Esprit and/or Esprit Blanc.

CA*

1-2 bottles: \$10.00
3- 6 bottles: \$20.00
7-12 bottles: \$30.00

CO, ID*,MT, NM, NV*,OR, WA*,WY

1-2 bottles: \$15.00
3-6 bottles: \$30.00
7-12 bottles: \$40.00

AK, DC, FL, GA*,HI, IA, IL, KS*, MD*, ME*, MI*, MN, MO, NC*, NE*, NH*, NY*, OH*, SC*, TN*, TX*, VA*, VT*, WI, WV*

1-2 bottles: \$20.00
3- 6 bottles: \$35.00
7-12 bottles: \$45.00

*State and local taxes apply

LEGAL

Due to federal and state laws, we are permitted to ship to addresses in the above states only. Wines may only be shipped to and received by adults at least 21 years of age. **An adult signature is required at delivery for all shipped wine orders.**

WINE

WINE	QUANTITY	LIST PRICE	VINDEPENDENT PRICE	VINSIDER PRICE	TOTAL
JUNE FEATURED WINE [10% DISCOUNT REFLECTED IN PRICE]					
VERMENTINO 2013	_____	\$24.30	\$21.60	\$18.90	_____
WHITE WINES					
ESPRIT DE TABLAS BLANC 2011	_____	\$40.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	_____
CÔTES DE TABLAS BLANC 2012	_____	\$27.00	\$24.30	\$21.60	_____
PATELIN DE TABLAS BLANC 2013	_____	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$16.00	_____
ROUSSANNE 2012	_____	\$35.00	\$31.50	\$28.00	_____
GRENACHE BLANC 2012	_____	\$27.00	\$24.30	\$21.60	_____
ANTITHESIS 2011	_____	\$35.00	\$31.50	\$28.00	_____
ROSÉ WINES					
DIANTHUS 2013	_____	\$27.00	\$24.30	\$21.60	_____
PATELIN DE TABLAS ROSÉ 2013	_____	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$16.00	_____
RED WINES					
ESPRIT DE TABLAS 2011	_____	\$55.00	\$49.50	\$44.00	_____
ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL 2010	_____	\$55.00	\$49.50	\$44.00	_____
CÔTES DE TABLAS 2012	_____	\$35.00	\$31.50	\$28.00	_____
PATELIN DE TABLAS 2012	_____	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$16.00	_____
FULL CIRCLE PINOT NOIR 2011	_____	\$45.00	\$40.50	\$36.00	_____
TANNAT 2011	_____	\$40.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	_____
DESSERT WINE					
VIN DE PAILLE 2012	_____	\$45.00	\$40.50	\$36.00	_____

SUBTOTAL _____

CASE DISCOUNT (IF APPLICABLE) _____

STATE AND LOCAL TAXES WILL BE APPLIED

SHIPPING _____

ORDER TOTAL _____

I certify that I am 21 years or older.

BILLING & SHIPMENT: EITHER

VINsider Name: _____

VINsider Number: _____

Signature: _____

Bill to my credit card on file Ship to my address on file

OR

BILL TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

SHIP TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

CREDIT CARD:

MC/Visa/AmEx #: _____

Exp. Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

To order: return form to Tablas Creek Vineyard, 9339 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446 or
fax 805.237.1314 :: email orders@tablascreek.com :: order online at www.tablascreek.com

FEATURED WINE: 2013 VERMENTINO

Wines are organic products and, as such, have their own life cycles. At the vineyard, we taste through our cellar every month and see which wines are showing particularly well given the season and the wines' own inherent evolution. As a way of sharing these observations with you, we will periodically spotlight one of our wines. To encourage you to try it, we offer the featured wine, for the designated time only, at a 10% discount.

The featured wine program continues with the 2013 Vermentino, featured from June 1 through June 30, 2013.



Production Notes: The 2013 *Vermentino* is our twelfth bottling of this traditional Mediterranean varietal, known principally in Sardinia, Corsica, and Northern Italy.

Tasting Notes: Shows a zesty, citrusy nose that also includes the fresh green herbs and pronounced minerality characteristic of *Vermentino*. In the mouth, an initial impression of richness quickly turns crisp, with great acids, just a hint of tropical fruit, and a long, bright, Meyer lemon/key lime finish.

Suggested Food Pairings: The 2013 *Vermentino* pairs beautifully with fresh seafood, particularly shellfish. Try it with linguine with clam sauce or pesto.

Meet the Tablas Creek Team! Questions for John Morris

John has served as the Tasting Room Manager at Tablas Creek since 2007. Marketing Coordinator Lauren Cross interviewed him in May, 2014.

How did you come to live in the Central Coast?

I moved here from Seattle nine years ago. After 22 years there, I was looking for more sunshine, warmer weather, and a more rural environment. Yet I didn't want to be in the middle of nowhere, and I wanted to stay on the West Coast. The wine region of Paso Robles offered enough excitement and a feeling of being someplace where something was happening without staying in the city.

What is your favorite part of being the Tablas Creek Tasting Room Manager?

Being part of such a talented team, and the satisfaction of knowing at the end of the day that we took such excellent care of so many people, showed them so many outstanding wines, and often made their day.

Which TCV wine is your go-to on a warm summer day or night?

Usually it's a tie between Dianthus rosé and Vermentino, but this year I'm especially drawn toward the 2012 *Côtes de Tablas Blanc*.

What have you been up to when you're not at Tablas Creek?

Working on our rather enormous garden at home and driving our three kids from one activity to another.

What part of the Tablas Creek project are you most excited about?

Everything really. The delicious, well-made, balanced wines. The organic farming component. The biodynamic experiment. And being a part of history and the collaboration between two such notable wine families.

If you had to choose a different career, what would you be?

Besides a race car driver? I'd be a successful, small-scale organic farmer.



Tablas at Home: Coming Events at the Vineyard and in Paso Robles

Sunday, June 15 Meet the Vineyard Animals

10:00 AM

Spend the morning with our viticulturist Levi Glenn getting to know our alpacas, sheep, donkeys, chickens and pigs plus meet other native animals like owls, hawks, foxes and reptiles provided by Zoo To You. Learn how these animals contribute to Tablas Creek's organic and biodynamic vineyard practices. Bring the whole family; children are welcome! This event is complimentary to all VINsiders and children and \$15 for adult guests. A picnic style lunch will be served paired with Tablas Creek wines.

Saturday, June 21 Real Men Drink Pink

2:00 PM

Join us, along with two dozen local rosé producers, for the ultimate summer wine tasting experience! Held at Star Farms, a virtual oasis just north of Paso Robles, complete with a half-acre blue lagoon pool, white sandy beaches and tropical palm trees, the afternoon begins with a rosé Grand Tasting. The PINK Party immediately follows, and includes swimming, lounging, and a beach dance party. The day is rounded out with regional culinary fabulousness presented by top Paso Robles chefs and the best food trucks around. Proceeds will benefit breast cancer programs at the Cancer Support Community -- California Central Coast. Tickets are \$70 for the general public, \$60 for VINsiders; for tickets or more information go to www.realmendrinkpink.org and enter the code PINKTABLAS for your discount.

Saturday, August 16 Pig Roast

6:00 PM

At Tablas Creek, we love terrific parties, especially when they involve great food, charming company, and, of course, wonderful wines. To that end, we're hosting our annual pig roast to celebrate the impending harvest. We'll be doing something a little different at this year's pig roast. This year, the feast will be completely "farm to table", featuring all locally grown accompaniments and our own heirloom pigs raised on the property.

This is a casual outdoor party, just right for summer in the vineyard. The cost is \$80 for VINsiders and \$95 for guests. Email us at events@tablascreek.com or call us at 805.237.1231 ext. 30 for reservations or more information.

Saturday, December 6 En Primeur Tasting and Futures Offering

VINsiders are invited to join Tablas Creek winemakers for the twelfth annual barrel tasting and sale *en primeur* of Tablas Creek's remarkable red wines from the outstanding 2013 vintage. Offering wine *en primeur* is a time-honored French tradition most often associated with first-growth Bordeaux estates. In outstanding vintages, valued customers are offered the opportunity to secure a limited quantity of sought-after wines at a special price in advance of bottling and subsequent general release. VINsiders will receive an invitation and reservation form in the mail in early November.

August 2-9, 2015

Rhône River Cruise with Tablas Creek

We're excited to offer a return to the Mediterranean in the summer of 2015. Winemaker Neil Collins and founders Robert and Barbara Haas will lead a cruise group on an intimate river cruise up the Rhône Valley from Avignon to Lyon aboard Uniworld Boutique River Cruises' new ship, the SS Catherine. The daily shore tours include a behind-the-scenes visit to Châteauneuf de Beaucastel culminating in a gourmet lunch prepared by Beaucastel's Michelin-starred chef Laurent Deconick. We have exclusive booking rights to this ship until July 2014, and hope we can have a 100% Tablas Creek group. Cabins start at \$4234 per person. For all the details, and to book, visit our travel partners' Web site at foodandwinetrails.com/tablascreek2015 or call Food & Wine Trails at (800) 367-5348. We hope that you will join us!



Tablas on Tour: National Events

June 18, 2014

Winemaker Dinner at Elbow Room
Fresno, California
www.elbowroomfresno.com
559.227.1234

June 26, 2014

Winemaker Dinner at Far Western Tavern
Orcutt, California
www.farwesterntavern.com
805.937.2211

June 28, 2014

Santa Barbara Wine Festival
Santa Barbara, California
www.sbnature.org/winefestival/
805.682.4711 ext. 112

July 10, 2014

Winemaker Dinner at Tam O'Shanter
Los Angeles, California
www.lawrysonline.com/tam-oshanter
323.664.0228

August 17, 2014

Family Winemakers of California Tasting
San Mateo, California
www.familywinemakers.org
916.498.7500

August 21-24, 2014

Los Angeles Food and Wine Festival
Los Angeles, California
www.lafw.com
855.433.5239

September 9-10, 2014

Rhone Rangers Southern California Tasting
Los Angeles, California
www.rhonerangers.org
800.467.0163

September 25-28, 2014

Sunset SAVOR the Central Coast
Santa Margarita Ranch
Santa Margarita, California
www.savorcentralcoast.com

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