



International Wine Cellar

the consumer's passport to fine wine

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD

2005 Côtes de Tablas Blanc 88

(42% viognier, 33% roussanne, 19% marsanne and 6% grenache blanc) Yellow-gold. Fresh, floral aromas suggest dried pear, peach skin and white pepper. Round and oily, with full-bodied but energetic pit fruit flavors and a brisk, peppery finish. This is made to drink soon after release, according to general manager Jason Haas.

2005 Grenache Blanc 89

Light yellow. Spicy orange and white peach scents are brightened by zesty minerality and white flowers. Chewy orchard fruit flavors give way to more supple tropical qualities, but retain focus and a refreshing dry edge. Gains depth and sweetness on the juicy finish and really hangs around on the aftertaste.

2005 Roussanne 92

Bright gold. Ripe honeyed pear and nectarine on the nose, with a gentle vanilla quality adding depth. Pliant orchard and pit fruit flavors show a supple texture and pick up a light toffee character with air. Expands across the palate, finishing with slow-building mineral and floral flavors. This boasts impressive, palate-staining presence and excellent cut.

2005 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc 91

(70% roussanne, 25% grenache blanc and 5% picpoul) Medium gold. Powerful, exotic aromas suggest honeyed apple and peach, with a suave vanilla component building with air. Round and vaguely sweet orchard fruit flavors are snapped into shape by brisk minerality, which carries into the finish. Suave, deeply flavored and impressively persistent, with the concentration and balance to repay a few years in the cellar.

2005 Chardonnay Antithesis 90

Green-gold. Ripe pear and floral honey scents show a subtle toffee and brioche quality, with bright minerality adding cut; smells like a serious wine from the Maconnais. Supple and round, with gently leesy orchard and citrus fruit flavors, soft acidity and a surprisingly spicy finish. I like the complexity here.

2006 Côtes de tables Blanc 89

(59% viognier, 32% marsanne, 6% grenache blanc and 3% roussanne) Bright yellow. Spicy orange and lime on the nose, with a dusty mineral quality adding interest. Racy, sharply focused citrus zest and green apple scents gain weight with air, picking up a light apricot character. Offers gentle sweetness on the long, spicy finish.

2006 Grenache Blanc 91

Light yellow. Intensely spicy apple, nectarine and dried peach aromas are complicated by curry powder, saffron and fresh bay; this highly intriguing set of scents may well be due to the "very long, slow ferment" reported by Haas. Precise orchard fruit flavors are energized by citrus zest and white pepper notes that carry into the long, pliant finish. A fascinating wine with wonderful cut and complexity, and the balance to age.

2006 Roussanne 91

Yellow-gold. Nutty peach and apricot scents are brightened by orange peel and floral honey. Lush and creamy on entry, then pulled together by racy acidity, which supports the wine's ripe tangerine and pit fruit flavors. Finishes with suave, spicy persistence and excellent cling.

2006 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc 92

(65% roussanne, 30% grenache blanc and 5% picpoul) Pale gold. Vibrant quince and green apple on the nose, with energetic citrus zest and minerals adding energy. Sharply focused lime and apple flavors are impressively balanced and clean, with slow-building honey and tangerine adding depth. Finishes with impressively pure, vibrant citrus flavors and excellent length. A very fresh blend.

2006 Viognier 90

Light yellow. Pungent citrus and peach aromas are brightened by honeysuckle and zesty minerality. This really smells like Condrieu, and tastes like it too, with vivid white peach and poached pear flavors. Firm acidity adds focus to the long, juicy finish. This is lovely.

2006 Bergeron 89

Light yellow. Intensely floral nose features vibrant, spicy pear and white peach with a light dusting of jasmine. Fresh and racy, offering spicy orchard fruit flavors and brisk, mouthwatering acid lift. Finishes with impressive cut, clarity and persistence. Bergeron is the Savoie name for roussanne, and this wine is made in small quantities as an homage to the traditional, exuberant style of Alpine white wine.

2006 Chardonnay Antithesis 90

Yellow-gold. Toasty pear and apple aromas are energized by vibrant minerals and complicated by sexy florality. Lush and supple, with deep orchard fruit flavors and refreshingly bitter citrus pith character. This is very Burgundian in expression, with firm fruit and mineral character and musky spiciness. Pretty impressive.

2006 Vermentino 89

Pale yellow. Racy citrus and underripe melon on the nose, with subtle floral and peach skin qualities adding complexity. Spicy, herb-accented melon and pear flavors deliver energetic cut and finish with very good juicy persistence. This would be great with grilled fish.

2006 Rosé 90

(60% mourvèdre, 28% grenache and 12% counoise) Medium pink. Fresh raspberry and cherry scents are complemented by pungent herbs and dried flowers, with suave orange peel and anise arriving with air; really smells like a Bandol. Fleshy red fruit flavors are firmed by gentle mineral qualities, which add verve to the ripe, round finish. Comes in at 14.8% alcohol but doesn't seem warm at all. This would be fantastic with herbed fish or poultry, or high-fat, stinky cheeses.



2005 Counoise**91**

Medium red. Suavely perfumed aromas of red and dark berries, fresh rose and pungent herbs. Bright strawberry and raspberry flavors gain depth with air, picking up exotic licorice and refreshing mineral character. Very fresh and energetic on the long, juicy finish, with the red berry qualities echoing. This shows really outstanding poise and focus.

2005 Côtes de Tablas**90**

(43% grenache, 24% mourvèdre, 18% syrah and 15% counoise) Deep ruby. Spicy red berries and cherry on the nose, with musky underbrush and baking spices adding complexity; smells like a really good southern Rhône wine. Fresh red fruit flavors are enlivened by zesty mineral and candied floral qualities. Finishes sweet but with a pleasing bitter cherry bite. The tannins here are silky and harmonious, never intruding on the suave fruit.

2005 Mourvèdre**91**

(includes 10% syrah) Deep ruby. Exotically perfumed nose combines strong cherry and cassis scents with Christmas spices and pungent herbs. Deep and chewy but sweet, with concentrated cherry and licorice flavors and firm mineral snap. Leaves a suave, dusty impression on the long, juicy finish. This is extremely elegant for the variety, displaying outstanding complexity, poise and clarity.

2005 Syrah**91**

(includes 10% grenache) Inky purple. Highly aromatic nose displays ripe blackberry and kirsch qualities, along with candied licorice and pungent dried flowers. Fleishy and sweet, with deep dark fruit preserve flavors, velvety tannins and gentle mineral lift. No excess fat here, but there's plenty of deep, sweet, expansive fruit.

2005 Esprit de Beaucastel**93**

(44% mourvèdre, 26% grenache, 25% syrah and 5% counoise) Dark red. Exotically perfumed aromas of smoky cherry and dark berries complicated by black cardamom, violet and tobacco. Chewy dark fruit flavors flesh out with air but maintain focus, gaining a candied licorice quality on the close. Refuses to let go of the palate but is in no way sloppy. On the contrary: this displays outstanding energy and brilliant mineral lift.

2005 Esprit de Beaucastel Panoplie**94**

(70% mourvèdre, 25% grenache and 5% syrah) Bright purple. Hugely aromatic, exotic bouquet of dark fruit liqueur, floral oil and incense. Very heady stuff, with sweet cherry and blueberry flavors complicated by candied licorice, violet pastille and mocha. Deepens and develops greater sweetness with air, finishing with outstanding breadth and cling. Wilder and more floral than the "basic" Esprit, with more elegance to boot.

2005 Tannat**90**

Inky ruby. Pungent mulberry and blueberry scents are deepened by cured tobacco and espresso. Round and supple, with palate-staining dark berry preserve flavors and a late-arriving hit of licorice. Shockingly velvet-textured for this variety, which is more likely to be inky, bitter and hard-edged (Haas noted its value as a blending grape, referring to it as "Dr. T"). Finishes with good sweet persistence and clarity. I'd never have guessed this to be tannat.

2005 Vin de Paille**92**

(375 ml; 34% roussanne, 29% grenache blanc, 24% viognier and 13% marsanne) Medium gold. Sexy bouquet shows ripe peach and apricot along with suave yellow rose and magnolia qualities. Creamy pit fruit flavors are complicated by bitter citrus marmalade, and show impressive sappy cling on the back end. Very sweet but not syrupy, with excellent clarity and lift for this style.

2005 Vin de Paille Quintessence**94**

(375 ml; 100% roussanne) Deep gold. Explosive, exotic bouquet of apricot, poached pear, guava and magnolia blossom. Round and thick (this was picked at 46 degrees Brix), with clinging exotic and tropical fruit flavors and a wild smoked meat quality carrying into the finish. This really won't let go of the palate. This was bottled with 8.6% alcohol.

2005 Vin de Paille Sacrerouge**92**

(375 ml.; 100% mourvèdre) Dark ruby. Smoky raspberry and dark chocolate aromas are complicated by rose pastille and a light vanilla character. Lush and pliant, with deep red berry and kirsch flavors lifted by juicy acids. Becomes stickier and sweeter with air, finishing with port-like earthiness but bright red fruit flavors. This utterly intriguing wine seems more vivid than Banyuls.