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TRIBUNE

LOCAL WINE PICKS

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With its 2003 **Vin de Paille "Sacrerouge"** (\$45), Tablas Creek Vineyard offers an interesting twist on dessert wines. Ripe mourvedre grapes are spread on straw-covered benches in greenhouses and allowed to dehydrate in the sun. This concentrates the sugars and flavors. (The process is traditional in certain parts of the Mediterranean; "vin de paille" is French for "straw wine.") When the desired concentration is reached, the shriveled grapes are pressed, and the juice is fermented. The result is a wine with flavors of raisins, dried fig, and dark chocolate. It's sweet but not cloying, and the alcohol is a modest 13.6 percent – compared with my other recommendations, which exceed 16 percent. The wine is only available from the tasting room