



TABLAS
CREEK
VINEYARD



Neil Collins



TABLAS CREEK

ESTATE

Winter 2007



Tablas Creek Winery is a French-American partnership between the Perrin family of Château de Beaucastel in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, and the family of Robert Haas, which for years imported Beaucastel through Vineyard Brands.

For both families, getting this project right has meant painstaking effort, beginning with the decision to import plant material from Beaucastel, which was held in quarantine before it could be planted. Post-quarantine, Tablas propagated and sold vines. These selections have dramatically expanded and strengthened the Rhône wine movement in this country, and some, like the grenache blanc and grenache noir, are emerging as great California vine successes.

Meanwhile, the estate planted vines, established an organic farming regime and started making wines. Inevitably, Tablas Creek wines have had to endure comparisons to their illustrious French partner, even before the vineyards matured or the blends really found their footing.

So to award Tablas its first Winery of the Year amounts to a coming-out party. Mastering Paso Robles has meant mastering what Beaucastel is known for, grenache and mourvèdre, the two principle grapes in the Esprit de Beaucastel Rouge. In early vintages this was a fairly simple red; it now has a meatier, more muscular style and a newly earned depth.

But the real surprise, according to Robert Haas, has been the whites, which have thrived in Paso Robles' dramatic diurnal climate. "The grapes will typically stay on the vine three weeks longer than in France because of those cold nights," he says. The 2004 roussanne is rich yet poised, and the winery's two 2005 white blends, the Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc and the Côtes de Tablas, are stellar. The latter achieved the highest score of any domestic white blend in the last ten years—a tremendous achievement for a young American sibling. —P.J.C.

TOP SCORING WINES

- 94 '05 Paso Robles Côtes de Tablas Blanc \$22 (4/07)
- 93 '05 Paso Robles Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc \$35 (8/07)
- 90 '04 Paso Robles Roussanne \$27 (4/07)



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Distributed by Vineyard Brands
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Founded: 1989 Winemaker: Neil Collins Acres owned: 120 Annual production: 16,000 cases Estate grown: 100% Owners: The Haas Vineyard Company and the Perrin Vineyard Company Known for: Impeccable Rhône varietal wines Location: Paso Robles, CA Website: tablascreek.com