

Tablas Creek Vineyard

By Josh Raynolds

Beginning with the 2011 vintage there will be no more references to Beaucastel on any of the Tablas Creek labels as the Perrins and the Haas family, the two partners in this venture, believe that the winery can and should stand on its own merit and that the Beaucastel association was no longer a necessity. Winemaker Neil Collins, who is a former chef, told me that he continues to be excited by working with counoise, which is now a component of four of the five blended red wines here, "because it has a softening and civilizing effect and tones down the bullies, like having a woman working in a restaurant kitchen. It keeps things in line."

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Vermentino Paso Robles

(\$27) Pale, green-tinged straw. Stony citrus and green apple aromas, with complicating jasmine and herbal notes adding pungency. Brisk and minerally on the palate, showing good depth and a refreshingly bitter edge to its racy lime and lemon zest flavors. Finishes clean and bright. **89**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Patelin de Tablas Blanc Paso Robles

(\$20) (45% grenache blanc, 34% viognier, 18% roussanne and 3% marsanne; all stainless steel): Bright straw. High-pitched aromas of lime zest and lemongrass, with a deeper note of fig building in the glass. Dry, tightly wound flavors of tangy citrus fruits, white flowers and herbs accented by spices. Closes dry and long, leaving mineral and white pepper notes behind. **90**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Marsanne Paso Robles

(\$30) (all stainless steel): Greenish yellow. Fresh citrus and orchard fruits on the nose, with zesty minerals and a hint of quince adding verve. Clean, bracing, focused and light on its feet, offering lively pear and Meyer lemon flavors and good mineral lift. Finishes with refreshingly bitter citrus bite, good energy and spicy persistence. This wine shows much more verve than I usually expect from New World marsanne. **90**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Cotes de Tablas Blanc Paso Robles

(\$27) (27% viognier, 26% grenache blanc, 25% marsanne and 22% roussanne): Pale yellow. Leesy peach and pear aromas are complemented by white flowers and lemon zest. Supple citrus and pit fruit flavors show very good depth and back-end lift, picking up dusty minerality with air. Finishes clean and tight, with nervy cut and very good floral persistence. **91**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Chardonnay Antithesis Paso Robles

(\$35) Light gold. Perfumed bouquet of pear, melon, anise, pungent flowers and candied ginger, with a stony nuance adding vivacity. Sappy and penetrating, offering taut orchard fruit and citrus pith flavors along with deeper notes of honeydew and herbs. Finishes with firm grip and very good clarity, leaving anise and melon notes behind. **90**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Picpoul Blanc Paso Robles

(\$27) Pale straw. Ripe pear, melon and orange zest aromas and flavors are complemented by honey and white flowers. Sappy and clinging, with strong punch and a refreshingly bitter edge. Leaves notes of anise and honey behind on the warm, silky finish. **88**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Grenache Blanc Paso Robles

(\$27) Pale gold. Intense aromas of tangerine and nectarine are underscored by notes of jasmine, herbs and minerals. Fleshy pit and citrus fruit flavors display impressive depth and clarity. Shows a sappy, velvety quality and finishes with very good energy and thrust. **90**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Roussanne Paso Robles

(\$30) Light gold. Ripe pear and orange pith on the fragrant nose, with notes of smoky minerals and chamomile adding complexity. Smooth and fleshy on the palate, offering juicy orchard and pit fruit flavors sharpened by a stony nuance. The long, spicy finish clings with impressive authority, showing the viscosity and power of a red wine. **91**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc Paso Robles

(\$40) (64% roussanne, 26% grenache blanc and 10% picpoul): Pale gold. Highly perfumed aromas of ripe orchard and pit fruits, white flowers and minerals. Round and seamless on the palate, offering intense poached pear and peach flavors lifted by a note of orange zest. Rich but not at all heavy, finishing sappy, spicy and very long. **92**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Rose Paso Robles

(\$27) (58% mourvedre, 30% grenache and 12% counoise): Pale red. Perfumed bouquet of red and dark berries, dried rose, black pepper and orange zest. Fresh and spicy on the palate, with sappy raspberry, bitter cherry and floral pastille flavors lifted by juicy acidity. Finishes broad and long, with strong punch and lingering spiciness. This rose drinks more like a light red than a pink wine. **90**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Counoise Paso Robles

(\$35) Bright ruby. Intensely floral bouquet evokes rose- and lavender-accented red fruit aromas, along with slow-building Asian spices and herbs. Tangy, focused and pure, showing impressively deep redcurrant and bitter cherry flavors. Picks up a darker blackberry quality on the finish, which is gently tannic and impressively long. **90**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Grenache Paso Robles

(\$40) Lurid ruby-red. Powerful aromas of raspberry, cherry compote, gingerbread and white pepper. Fleshy but focused, offering sappy red and dark berry flavors and suave floral and Asian spice qualities. This supple, seamless grenache finishes with very good clarity, molten tannins and lingering sweetness. **91**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Mourvedre Paso Robles

(\$40) Bright ruby. A fragrant bouquet evokes dark berry preserves, violet and licorice complemented by smoke and allspice notes. Sappy, smooth and expansive, offering intense blackcurrant and bitter cherry flavors underscored by a zesty mineral nuance. Chewy but fine-grained tannins give shape to the clinging finish, which leaves cherry pit and spice notes behind. **91**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Syrah Paso Robles

(\$40) Glass-staining ruby. Intense, spice-accented aromas of cherry, cassis and pipe tobacco, with a floral nuance gaining strength with air. Juicy and focused on the palate, offering bitter cherry and dark berry preserve flavors and suggestions of candied violet and anise. Dusty tannins add grip to the impressively persistent finish, which leaves floral and cherry pit notes behind. **91**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Cotes de Tablas Rouge Paso Robles

(\$30) (46% grenache, 39% syrah, 10% mourvedre and 5% counoise): Deep ruby. Complex scents of black raspberry, pipe tobacco, potpourri and spicecake. Smooth, open-knit cherry

and dark berry flavors are complemented by smoky herb and lavender qualities, with a spicy nuance building on the back half. Closes on a sweet note, with excellent clarity and spicy persistence. **91**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard En Gobelet Paso Robles

(\$45) (37% grenache, 28% mourvedre, 13% syrah, 12% counoise and 10% tannat): Vivid ruby. Complex, highly aromatic nose displays candied red berries, minerals, potpourri and Asian spices. Perfumed and sappy in the mouth, with a silky texture and deep raspberry and floral pastille flavors given lift by juicy acidity. Gentle tannins give grip and bite to the long, focused finish. **92**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Paso Robles

(\$55) (45% mourvedre, 30% grenache, 21% syrah and 4% counoise): Bright ruby-red. Exotically perfumed bouquet of ripe red fruits, Asian spices, lavender and cola. Pliant, sweet and lithe, offering intense raspberry, bitter cherry and floral pastille flavors along with hints of star anise and blood orange. Finishes silky, sweet and long, with resonating floral notes and excellent focus. **92**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Panoplie Paso Robles

(\$95) (60% mourvedre, 30% grenache and 10% syrah): Vivid red. Sexy, highly perfumed bouquet of black raspberry, potpourri, star anise and incense. Offers deeply pitched but lively red and dark berry preserve flavors, with notes of candied flowers and spicecake adding complexity. The floral element builds with air and carries through the long, sappy, alluringly sweet finish. I have little doubt that this wine will age gracefully but it's delicious right now. **94**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Tannat Paso Robles

(\$40) Inky purple. Powerful dark berry and cherry compote aromas develop floral and underbrush nuances with air, along with notes of licorice and star anise. Rich and chewy on the palate, with concentrated blackberry and cassis flavors and a sexy, sweet floral pastille nuance. Closes with slow-building tannins and strong, spicy persistence. **91**

2011 Tablas Creek Vineyard Patelin de Tablas Paso Robles

(\$20) (52% syrah, 20% grenache, 18% mourvedre and 10% syrah): Bright ruby. Pungent raspberry and cherry pit on the nose, with dark chocolate and violet notes adding complexity. Juicy red fruit flavors are energized by tangy acidity, picking up sweetness with air. Shows a zesty mineral quality on the long, juicy finish, which shows only a hint of tannins. This energetic wines drinks very well right now. **90**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Vin de Paille Quintessence Paso Robles (half bottle)

(\$85) (100% roussanne): Bright orange-gold. Ripe tropical fruits, honey and ginger on the hugely aromatic nose. Lush, weighty mango, pineapple and peach nectar flavors are brightened by a touch of bitter lemon pith and lifted by a spicy nuance. Shows very impressive energy for such a rich, sweet, even decadent wine, finishing with serious punch and cling. I imagine that this wine would go great with blue or washed rind cheeses but I'd be inclined to serve it by itself. **95**

2010 Tablas Creek Vineyard Vin de Paille Sacrerouge Paso Robles (half bottle)

(\$65) (100% mourvedre): Bright ruby. The exotically perfumed bouquet evokes dark berry liqueur, dark chocolate and licorice, plus a smoky overtone. Lush and expansive, offering sweet blackberry and blueberry flavors that show impressive depth as well as energy. Finishes smooth and long, with lingering spiciness and impressive cling. **92**