

# TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD



TABLAS CREEK	2000	CLOS BLANC	PASO ROBLES	(\$35.00)	WHITE	88
TABLAS CREEK	2000	GRAND CUVEE*	PASO ROBLES (not yet determined)		RED	92+
TABLAS CREEK	2000	PETITE CUVEE**	PASO ROBLES	(\$25.00)	RED	92
TABLAS CREEK	1999	PETITE CUVEE	PASO ROBLES	(\$25.00)	RED	87
TABLAS CREEK	2000	RESERVE CUVEE***	PASO ROBLES	(\$35.00)	RED	93
TABLAS CREEK	1999	RESERVE CUVEE	PASO ROBLES	(\$35.00)	RED	90

\* 2000 Grand Cuvée renamed 2000 Panoplie

\*\* 2000 Petite Cuvée renamed 2000 Côtes de Tablas

\*\*\* 2000 Reserve Cuvée renamed 2000 Esprit de Beaucastel

"This promising hillside vineyard west of Highway 101, six miles from the Pacific Ocean, is jointly owned by importer Robert Haas and the Perrin family of Château Beaucastel in Châteauneuf du Pape. There is a total of 180 acres, 80 of which are under vine, and 30 leased. Except for a small parcel of Chardonnay, only Rhône varietals are planted. The plantings include Mourvèdre (45%), Syrah (22%), Grenache (22%), and the rest Counoise. The white varietals include Roussanne (50%), Viognier (25%), Marsanne (10%), Grenache Blanc, and the aforementioned Chardonnay. Tablas Creek is still a work in progress, with the winery having only been built in 1997. While the quality was at first uninspiring, it has become exciting over recent vintages, particularly with the 2000s. Planted in 1992, at elevations between 1,400-1,600 feet, the first crop was 1994.

The **2000 Clos Blanc** (a blend of 45% Roussanne, 19% Viognier, 19% Marsanne, and 17% Grenache Blanc) exhibits an excellent citrusy nose, no evidence of oak, and hints of orange marmalade intermixed with citrus, candle wax, and spice. It possesses good acidity, freshness, full body and excellent fruit. Although this 2000 may last for 4-5 years, I recommend drinking it over its first 2-3 years of life.

In most vintages there are two cuvées of red wine, although in top years a microscopic quantity of a third wine, the Grand Cuvée\*, is produced. These offerings are aged in a combination of small barrels, *demi-muids*, and larger foudres. The terrific **2000 Petite Cuvée\*\*** (600 cases of a blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah) is available at a fair price. It exhibits copious aromas of kirsch liqueur, blackberries, and currants. Rich, full-bodied, and loaded with fruit, it is restrained as well as elegant. Already delicious, it will age for a decade or more. The top cuvée, the **2000 Reserve Cuvée\*\*\***, is a blend of 35% Mourvèdre, 26% Syrah, 25% Grenache, and 14% Counoise.

This 4,800-case offering does an impressive job of emulating a full-throttle southern Rhône red produced

in California. A saturated black/purple color is followed by aromas of licorice, roasted herbs, meats, blackberries, and cassis. It is intense and full-bodied, with sweet tannin, and impressive concentration. The Mourvèdre component will undoubtedly cause this wine to tighten up after bottling, and will provide 10-15 years of aging potential. It is no shy wine at 15% alcohol, but it is well-hidden beneath the wealth of fruit and extract. This is the most impressive wine yet made by Tablas Creek, and a clear sign that they are going to be a serious producer among the band of producers dedicated to grapes from southern France known as the Rhône Rangers. The 75-case **2000 Grand Cuvée\*** (55% Mourvèdre, 35% Syrah, and 10% Grenache) is a more structured, tightly-knit, backward, austere effort. It is an elegant, French-styled, impressive offering.

The 1999s display some of the cool weather conditions experienced in the Paso Robles region. The **1999 Petite Cuvée** (65% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and 10% Mourvèdre) is a sexy, up-front effort. Although not as complex or fleshy and textured as the 2000, it offers a beautifully ripe attack followed by dry, firm tannin in the austere finish. Its 15.2% alcohol is well hidden. The **1999 Reserve Cuvée** is a blend of 40% Mourvèdre, 27% Grenache, 23% Syrah, and 10% Counoise. It exhibits a dense purple color as well as a sweet perfume of blackberries, leather, licorice, earth, and pepper. Elegant, rich, medium to full-bodied, and ripe, with nicely integrated tannin, it will drink well for a decade or more.

An insider tip: should readers have access to it, they should check out the delightful rosé made at Tablas Creek. Keep in mind, these wines need to be drunk within their first six months of life."

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s

The  
**WINE**  
ADVOCATE.

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