

TABLAS CREEK VINEYARD

ESPRIT DE BEAUCASTEL 2003



The Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel 2003 is a blend of four estate-grown varietals, propagated from budwood cuttings from the Château de Beaucastel estate.

The 2003 vintage was tremendous: warm and sunny, with cool nights that prolonged the hangtime of the grapes and led to wines with excellent acidity. A relatively early flowering, combined with a warm but not overly hot summer produced unusually long hangtime, and grapes with concentrated flavors and a distinct minerality. Our first lots of Syrah came in on September 18th, followed by Grenache on September 25th, and Counoise and Mourvedre both on October 8th. The beautiful fall weather allowed us to bring in fruit when it was at peak ripeness, and allow other blocks to continue to mature. The harvest continued through October, with the last lot of Mourvedre safely in the cellar on October 29th.

The grapes were fermented using native yeasts in open and closed stainless steel fermenters. After pressing, the wines were moved into barrel, blended, and aged in 1200-gallon French oak foudres before being bottled in May 2004. The wine is unfinned and unfiltered.

The 2003 Esprit de Beaucastel is dark black-red in color, with a rich briary nose of blackberry and rare steak. The elegant, layered palate shows spicy plum and cherry fruit, smoky flavors and ripe tannins. The long finish shows flavors of mineral and black cherry. The wine is showing remarkably well now, but should evolve elegantly in bottle for 10-15 years or longer.

TECHNICAL NOTES

50% Mourvèdre
27% Syrah
16% Grenache
7% Counoise

14.8% alcohol by volume

3400 cases produced

FOOD PAIRINGS

Game
Dark Fowl (i.e., duck)
Richly flavored stews
Lamb
Asian preparation of red meats (i.e., beef stir fry)

