



DIANTHUS 2016



The Tablas Creek Vineyard Dianthus 2016 is a blend of three estate-grown varietals, propagated from budwood cuttings from the Château de Beaucastel estate. The blend incorporates the rosé traditions of the southern Rhône, taking its Mourvèdre foundation from the solid, dry rosés of Bandol and incorporating the structure of skin contact from the rich, juicy Grenache-based Tavel. Dianthus -- in pre-2012 vintages called simply Rosé -- refers to a genus of flowering plants known for their deep pink blossoms and known colloquially to gardeners as “pinks”.

We take the grapes for our Dianthus from the oldest section of French-source vines at Tablas Creek. In 1994, two years after our French vines had been released from their USDA-mandated quarantine, we had propagated just enough to plant a few rows of each varietal on a hill overlooking our vine nursery. Over the next few years, we used cuttings from these plants to plant the rest of our vineyard. These few rows of high-quality vines ripen later than the rest of the vineyard, so we harvest the Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Counoise together and co-ferment them (on their skins) in a single stainless steel fermenter. After 48 hours, we draw about 800 gallons of juice off the blend, and ferment it dry away from the skins. These lots are then supplemented with saignées (bleedings) from other Mourvèdre and Grenache lots in the cellar.

The grapes for Dianthus were grown on our certified organic estate vineyard.

The 2016 vintage, while still marked by drought, saw better rainfall than the four previous years, and the vineyard showed good health through most of the growing season. That season started with a very early budbreak and continued warm weather spurred our earliest-ever beginning to harvest, on August 18th. But beginning mid-August, three cool weeks slowed the ripening for all but our earliest grapes, and allowed them to reach flavor and phenolic maturity with slightly above-average hang time. Yields were better than 2015: at 2.97 tons/acre, right at our 10-year average. The resulting vintage shows excellent concentration but is also quite approachable, with open-knit textures and appealing juiciness.

The 2016 Dianthus is an electric pink. The nose shows watermelon candy, mint, yellow raspberry and a strawberry tart richness that hints at the flaky crust as well as the berries. The mouth is floral: rose petals, lemongrass, raspberry and plum, with a little tannic bite to maintain order on the back palate. Great acids come out on the finish, with flavors of cranberry and spice. A rosé to convert people who think that pink wines can't be serious. Drink before the end of 2018.

TECHNICAL NOTES

49% Mourvedre
37% Grenach
14% Counoise

14.4% Alcohol by Volume
900 Cases Produced

FOOD PAIRINGS

Salmon
Sushi
Anchovies
Sausages
Fried Chicken
Mediterranean tapas