

A Rhone away from Rhone

There is no place quite like the Rhone Valley, or is there? This month's selections answer that with an emphatic *yes* and highlight two amazing New World producers who are practicing conscientious farming, simple vinification and making some of the finest Rhone blends and single varietal wines in the US. Enjoy our selections of Tablas Creek & Cowhorn!

The Tablas Creek story begins in the 60's, when Robert Hass started importing Chateau de Beaucastel, an archetypal Chateauneuf-du-Pape from the Perrin family, into the US. In 1985, the Hass and Perrin families created a partnership to produce Rhone styled wines from vineyards in California. As they searched the state for soils and climate that closely matched the context of the real Rhone Valley, they imported vine cuttings from the Beaucastel Estate. By 1989 they found and purchased a rugged, high-elevation 120-acre site full of rocky soils in western Paso Robles and named it after the small creek that ran through the property.

The imported vines were tested and then propagated and grafted before finally finding their home away from home in Paso Robles limestone. They planted Mourvedre, Grenache Noir, Syrah and Counoise along with Roussane, Viognier, Marsanne and Grenache Blanc. The Estate vines are all dry farmed and have been certified organic since 2003. Recent efforts are focusing on the transition to fully biodynamic viticulture. The Patelin de Tablas wines have been produced since 2010 and include fruit from neighboring vineyards. The 2013 Patelin Blanc is a blend from 11 distinct sites throughout Paso Robles. All the varietals are whole cluster pressed and fermented in stainless steel with native yeasts. The wine is lively and full, bright and delicious, with concentration, texture and pedigree. It is brimming with minerals, honeysuckle, stone fruit and sweet fennel tones--a spectacularly well made wine that is beautiful as an everyday white wine from an over-achieving producer.

The red we've selected comes to us from Cowhorn, hailing from estate grown Grenache, farmed and produced with biodynamic practices in the Applegate Valley of southern Oregon. Cowhorn is the project of husband and wife, Bill and Barbara Steele, who came to land stewardship after successful careers in business management and finance. We love the wines of Cowhorn and think that the quality is superb. Doing things right from the start, they purchased property in 2002, and spent more than two years carefully studying the soil, site and microclimates compared to sites in the Rhone. They developed an integrated approach to farming and land stewardship with the help of world-renowned biodynamic consultant, Alan York.

By 2005, they began planting field-grown vines amongst the layers and layers of round river rock reminiscent of Chateauneuf-du-Pape. There are now blocks of Syrah, Grenache, Viognier, Marsanne and Roussane in addition to carefully placed and bountiful blocks of commercial food crops and orchard on the 117-acre property. In 2008, Bill and Barbara hired Ken Bernards (Ancien Wines) as consulting winemaker. They have created a vibrant and living ecosystem and we think this commitment shows in the quality of the wines. The winery is certified biodynamic with practices limiting intervention to a gentle guidance without manipulation and chemicals. The 2012 Grenache 20 was harvested from a single block that yielded only three barrels worth of wine. It spent 10 months in 33% new French oak. It is bright and plump, refreshing and complex, with both sweet and savory tones. A gorgeous wine we simply could not pass up, but supply is very limited. Please let us know as soon as possible if you'd like to reorder or try their other wines.

Questions, Concerns, Suggestions, Extend your Subscription?? Please, speak your mind!!

Purevinewines.com, (877) 404-1121

Until next month,

Joe, Tom, & Andria

(over for recipe of the month)

“fighting for the soul of wine..”



This Month's Biodynamic® / Organic Selections

Tablas Creek Patelin de Tablas Blanc

**54% Grenache Blanc, 25%
Viognier, 13% Roussane and
8% Marsanne**

Region: Paso Robles, CA.

Vintage: 2013

Delicate and sweet spring floral aromatics slowly open into a more fruited and spiced feel. There are essences of mandarins, pink grapefruit, orange blossom, mint along with tart peach and marzipan notes. Clean and bright, there is a lovely intensity and volume from start to finish as the creamy mouth-feel has welcome acidity that carries the flavors long on the palate. The flavors are of fresh squeezed Valencia oranges, ginger candy, honey suckle and a slightly steely and dusty mineral quality that focuses the fruit and floral driven core.

Cowhorn Grenache 20

**100% Grenache
Region: Applegate
Valley, OR**

Vintage: 2012

A small lot bottling of three barrels, this is a gorgeous wine of admirable concentration and depth. Aromatics of wild strawberries, juicy plums, black pepper, dried violets and dark herbs mingle and are emboldened by a bit of wood spice and savory tones. On the palate, the wine is wide, textural and balanced with ripe fruit tones, juicy acidity and lovely structure. There are complex flavors of roasted red and black fruit, dried violets, rich earth, cocoa and mocha. The concentration and extract is lovely with powerful fruit flavors and surprisingly low alcohol at 13%

Hey, why did my wine come in a used box?

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