



LES DEMOISELLES 2016

TASTING DATE - APRIL 2018

RATING **93**

A blend of 60% Mourvèdre and 40% Syrah, the 2016 Demoiselles Proprietary Red offers up a dramatic nose of black cherries, cassis, warm spices and creamy new oak. On the palate, it's full-bodied, rich and layered, with a chewy chassis of tannins and extract concealed in an ample core of dark fruit preserve. The finish is long and youthfully taut.

INSPIRACIÓN 2016

TASTING DATE - APRIL 2018

RATING **93**

A blend of 40% Grenache, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon and 27% Syrah, the 2016 Inspiración wafts from the glass with a sun-kissed bouquet of plum preserve, cassis, fig and sweet spices, with hints of some savory bass notes to come. On the palate, it's full-bodied, plush and juicy, with a richly extracted, flavorful mid-palate and some chewy tannins that make themselves felt on the finish.

FOR HER 2016

TASTING DATE - APRIL 2018

RATING **96**

A blend of 46% Syrah, 39% Graciano and 15% Viognier, the 2016 For Her bursts from the glass with an expressive bouquet of ripe cassis, orange blossom and pepper that's strongly marked by exotica from its Viognier component. On the palate, it's full-bodied, supple and velvety, with an expansive attack, fine-grained tannins and a ripe but succulent core of fruit. The finish is long, fine-grained and fragrant. Its textural elegance and integration made this one of my favorites in the L'Aventure range.

CHLOÉ 2016

TASTING DATE - APRIL 2018

RATING **93+**

The 2016 Cuvée Chloe is a blend of 69% Syrah and 31% Grenache that is co-fermented and saw around 20% whole cluster fermentation. The wine reveals aromas of ripe black fruits, roasted meat, espresso roast, dark chocolate and cracked pepper, followed by a rich, full-bodied palate that's amply endowed with extract, fruit and firm, chewy tannins—which may be stem-derived. It was only bottled a month ago when I tasted it, but even so, it's quite structurally assertive, so this is a wine for consumers that aren't afraid of tannin.

"A large appellation, Paso also varies considerably from one location to another, and in 2014, that diversity was recognized by fully 11 new sub-AVAs. The most obvious contrast, however, can be drawn between the cooler western sub-AVAs, such as Willow Creek and the Templeton Gap—which enjoy higher rainfall and frequently calcareous soils. Rhône varieties continue to be the region's calling card, but Paso's Bordeaux blends are becoming increasingly compelling."

OPTIMUS 2016

TASTING DATE - APRIL 2018

RATING **92**

A blend of 50% Syrah, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Petit Verdot that checks in at 15.4% alcohol, the 2016 Optimus reveals a lavish bouquet of crunchy berries, anise and creamy new oak. On the palate, it's full-bodied, spicy and richly tannic, with generous, oak-influenced flavors and a crunchy core of fruit. The finish is long and youthfully chewy. Bottled barely one month before I tasted it, this is already quite expressive and should begin to drink well after just a few years. The Optimus is Asseo's longest-running cuvée, realizing an ambition to blend Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon he nurtured in his native Bordeaux.

ESTATE CUVÉE 2016

TASTING DATE - APRIL 2018

RATING **93+**

The 2016 Estate Cuvée reveals a youthful bouquet of crème de cassis, ripe plums, licorice, pencil shavings and anise, framed by a generous application of creamy, spicy new oak. On the palate, it's full-bodied, ripe and heavily extracted, clamping down on the tongue and gums with an impenetrable wall of firm, chewy tannin that makes it hard to read. It's a bit too soon after bottling to truly get a handle on this, so I've given it a hesitant bracketed score. It's a blend of 52% Syrah, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon and 16% Petit Verdot that was matured in 90% new oak.

CÔTE À CÔTE 2016

TASTING DATE - APRIL 2018

RATING **94**

The 2016 Cote a Cote from L'Aventure offers up aromas of black cherries, clove, anise and dark chocolate. On the palate, the wine is full-bodied, rich and expansive, with a broad attack, a sweet, rounded mid-palate and a firm, chewy finish that shows a bit of stem tannin. There's a nice juiciness and purity to this large-scaled, powerful effort that's a blend of 55% Grenache, 25% Mourvèdre and 20% Syrah.