

Robert Parker
WINE ADVOCATE

LES DEMOISELLES 2017

TASTING DATE - FEBRUARY 2020 RATING **95**

The 2017 Cuvée Les Demoiselles is a blend of 70% Mourvèdre, 20% Syrah and 10% Grenache. Medium to deep ruby in the glass, the nose is super inviting, offering gregarious cranberry jelly, raspberry and strawberry jam, boysenberry, pomegranate and tangerine peel aromas with earthy notions of dried leaves, tree bark, grapefruit rind, dusty earth and rose petals. Medium to full-bodied, it's silky and unfurls slowly to lifted floral and amaro-tinged red and blue fruits, with an incredibly melting, pixelated frame and juicy acidity to carry the long, layered finish. This is fantastic!

INSPIRACIÓN 2017

TASTING DATE - FEBRUARY 2020 RATING **94**

This is the second vintage of this wine. Winemaker and owner Stephan Asseo says, "When you co-ferment, it's all boiled together and you get better harmony and integration. Each grape is a vector of the other when they are melting together. I have no explanation but that's the way it is." So the 2017 Inspiracion, from Willow Creek District in Paso Robles, is composed of 44% Grenache, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Syrah and 4% Grenache Blanc, all co-fermented. Medium to deep ruby in color, the nose explodes with marionberry, boysenberry, blueberry, blackberry, violet, lilac, warm peaches and apricot with notes of underbrush and exotic spices. Medium to full-bodied, it's silky and packed to the gills with ripe, tricolored fruits, expertly framed and with juicy freshness lifting the long, floral finish.

FOR HER 2017

TASTING DATE - FEBRUARY 2020 RATING **95**

The 2017 For Her is a co-fermented blend of 54% Syrah, 32% Graciano and 14% Viognier. It has a medium to deep ruby color and is scented of blueberry jam, boysenberries, baked blackberries and pie spices with touches of mint leaves, blood orange, charcuterie, pepper, grapefruit peel and flowers. The medium to full-bodied, very silky palate spreads its wings to red, blue and black fruits with pretty floral and citrus accents, with powdery tannins and fantastic freshness to lift the long, layered finish. This is lovely!

CHLOÉ 2017

TASTING DATE - FEBRUARY 2020 RATING **94**

Blended of 74% Syrah, 18% Grenache, 5% Viognier and 3% Graciano, all co-fermented and aged in 50% new oak, the medium to deep ruby-purple colored 2017 Cuvée Chloe gives up blueberry and boysenberry pie, cassis and red berry aromas with notes of cracked pepper, earth, bitter chocolate, mint leaves and blood orange. The medium to full-bodied palate is silky and layered with a firm frame and long, lifted finish.

"Although 2017 was cooler overall than the drought years preceding it, the heat wave in September saw temperatures of 115 degrees in Paso Robles and 114 degrees in other parts of San Luis Obispo County. For earlier-ripening varieties, it was a game of pick or wait. For later-ripening varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, grapes weren't fully ripe when the heat hit. Style and quality this vintage will be closely tied to winemakers' abilities to react and adapt to the challenges of the season, a prospect made trickier by the fact that the triple-digit heat was quickly replaced by cooler temperatures."

OPTIMUS 2017

TASTING DATE - FEBRUARY 2020 RATING **93**

Blended of 49% Syrah, 41% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Petit Verdot, the deep ruby colored 2017 Optimus opens with aromas of fresh fruits—wild blackberries, crushed blueberries and sour cherries—along with loamy earth, touches of cured meats, saline and olives, very fresh and crunchy on the nose. Medium to full-bodied and silky, it has great intensity and interplay of red, black and blue fruits with spices and savory touches. It has wonderful freshness, finishing long and lifted. This shows excellent restraint! It's drinking beautifully now but will reward another 3-5 years in the cellar.

ESTATE CUVÉE 2017

TASTING DATE - FEBRUARY 2020 RATING **96**

A blend of 49% Syrah, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 21% Petit Verdot, the 2017 Estate Cuvée has a very deep purple-black color and explosive nose of black cherry and boysenberry preserves, crème de cassis, cedar, violet, burnt orange peel, baker's chocolate, thyme, grilled meats, loamy earth and Indian spices. The silky, full-bodied palate is expansive, spicy and floral laced, with a firm but incredibly pixelated frame and great freshness on the long, dense finish. This merits another 3-5 years in bottle at least.

CÔTE À CÔTE 2017

TASTING DATE - FEBRUARY 2020 RATING **96**

The 2017 Côte à Côte is a blend of 48% Grenache, 32% Mourvèdre and 20% Syrah. Medium to deep ruby, it explodes with tricolored fruits: peach cobbler, apricot, marionberries, boysenberries and crushed blackberries with accents of dried leaves, saline, blood orange peel, pink peppercorn, cured meats, thyme and dried lavender. Medium to full-bodied and silky, it slowly spreads its wings in the mouth, blossoming into lovely technicolor fruits with a floral vein. It has a pixelated frame and freshness that begs for another sip, finishing long, layered and lifted. This is stunning!