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Easily one of the reference point producers in California, L'Aventure is run by French transplant (St. Emilion to be exact) Stephan Asseo, who began making wine in 1982 in Burgundy. He and his family later purchased Château Fleur Cardinal (St. Emilion) and Château Robin (Côtes de Castillon) in the Bordeaux region, where he stayed until 1996. Frustrated with the strict AOC regulations, he traveled through numerous wine regions looking for new terroir, and ended up falling in love with the rolling hills and limestone soils on the west side of Paso Robles, California.

Today, Asseo focuses on a number of blends from his estate vineyards located just off of Highway 46, west of the 101. In most vintages, he produces an entry level Optimus, which is based largely on Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot; a Cuvée Côte à Côte, which is always a GSM blend; and his Estate Cuvée, which is a mix of Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot (Stephan loves Petit Verdot). In addition, he often releases a straight Cabernet Sauvignon, a Cuvée Chloe (Syrah/Grenache), and a few other one off releases, which are sometime bottled only in magnum. He also produces a smoking rosé and a top-class white that's based largely on Roussanne.

For this retrospective, we focused on the Côte à Côte and the Estate Cuvée, and all of the bottles were shipped to Colorado, where I was able to follow the wines for multiple days. Even the older releases held up beautifully to air, and frankly, there were no duds here and they've all aged gracefully. This is just another example showing that these rich, hedonistic wines age just fine. Both cuvées show similar aging curves, with the wines benefiting from a handful of years in the cellar and then drinking well for a decade, which is as far as this retrospective went back. In general, the Côte à Côte release will evolve nicely for 15 years after the vintage (certainly longer depending on your preferences), and the Estate Cuvée will have over two decades of longevity.

Without a doubt, Asseo is one of the Central Coast superstars and the results speak for themselves. —Jeb Dunnuck

<u>Vintage</u>	<u>Wine</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Maturity</u>
2010	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	95+	Early
2009	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	95	Early
2008	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	92	Early
2007	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	96+	Early
2006	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	96	Early
2005	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	93	Early
2004	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	97	n/a
2003	L'Aventure Winery Cote a Cote	97	Early
2010	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	97	Young
2009	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	95+	n/a
2008	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	93	Early
2007	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	96	Early
2006	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	95	Early
2005	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	96	Early
2004	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	99	Early
2003	L'Aventure Winery Estate Cuvee	94	Early