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The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine

L'AVENTURE	2007	OPTIMUS	PASO ROBLES	(\$45.00)	RED (93-95)
L'AVENTURE	2007	ESTATE CABERNET	PASO ROBLES	(\$80.00)	RED 94+
L'AVENTURE	2007	COTE A COTE	PASO ROBLES	(\$85.00)	RED 95
L'AVENTURE	2007	ESTATE CUVÉE	PASO ROBLES	(\$85.00)	RED 95

One of the reference point producers in Paso Robles, Frenchman Stephan Asseo continues to turn out an intriguing as well as provocative range of brilliant red wines.

The sexiest offering at present is the **2007 Optimus** Proprietary red, a blend of 45% Syrah, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 15% Petit Verdot. More fruit-forward than the 2006, the 2007 gushes with blackberry and cassis fruit, smoky, burning embers, charcoal, and toasty new oak. Full-bodied and powerful with supple tannins, decent acids, and an overall impression of voluptuousness as well as extravagant fruit and opulence, it should drink beautifully for a decade.

Another long distance runner is the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate**, a wine worth following over the next 15-20 years. With classic aromas of graphite, creme de cassis, spring flowers, and earth, this is a big, broodingly backward, full-bodied Cabernet Sauvignon that is probably too formidably endowed and intense to attack presently, but given 3-4 years of bottle age, this wine should evolve as well as some of the North Coast Cabernet Sauvignons from Napa. Everything is there – crushed rock, creme de cassis, graphite, full-bodied power, fabulous concentration, purity, and a saturated purple color, all suggesting a brilliant wine. By the way, it is a blend of 95% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5 % Petit Verdot. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2025+.

Another blockbuster and decadently rich, extravagant expression of winemaking is the **2007 Cote a Cote**, a blend of 40% Grenache, 40% Mourvedre, and 20% Syrah. An incredible wine, it tips the scales at 15.9% alcohol but is loaded with melted licorice, black currant fruit, sweet, jammy cherries, forest floor, and a bit of pepper and fruitcake notes. Deep, full-bodied, and layered, it is voluptuous, with relatively low acidity and velvety tannins. Drink it over the next 7-8 years. Wow!

Composed of 49% Syrah, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the balance Petit Verdot, the **2007 Estate Cuvee** is a blockbuster. A seamlessly built, multidimensional effort, it boasts a black/blue color as well as a gorgeous perfume of graphite, charcoal, blueberry and blackberry liqueur, truffles, bouquet garni, and a subtle hint of oak. Superb texture and power in addition to a seamless integration of acidity, alcohol, tannin, and wood suggest it will evolve for 10-15 years.