

T O R

TOR Cabernet Sauvignon Cimarossa Vineyard, 2007

Blend: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Production: 490 cases
Release Date: October 2009

Vintage

The year began with some of the coldest temperatures on record, while the vines were safely in dormancy. Winter transitioned into spring earlier than usual, with budding, bloom and set all ahead of schedule. For the most part, it was a long cool growing season with few heat spikes. Labor Day brought back the heat, which was short lived, then back to cool, creating ideal harvest conditions into late October. All our Cabernet vineyards had extraordinary hang time contributing to their completeness and complexity.

Vineyard

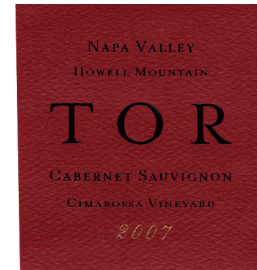
"Cimarossa" means 'red hill top' in Italian which aptly defines this very special hillside vineyard planted on a volcanic cinder cone. The elevation is 2,100 feet and the soils are predominately red volcanic rock and dust. Not much can be cultivated on these steep hills besides vines and some olive trees (which produce my favorite California olive oil). This is a special place: the clusters are small, the berries are tiny, but the flavors are BIG!

Winemaking

During the long growing season of 2007, we thinned all Cabernet blocks several times to bring crop into balance with the vine growth. This extra labor paid off with uniformly ripe grapes at harvest. All the Cabernets had excellent uniformity in grape quality; seeds almost tasting like walnuts, no greenness. After morning crushing, the must was presoaked till the indigenous yeast began to slowly metabolize grape sugar, signaling a beginning of fermentation. For the Cimarossa, soaks and fermentation lasted 29 days; the juice was then racked off directly into small Taransaud and Damey French oak barrels. After 22 months in small oak, the wine went to bottle unfiltered, unfinned. Net - net, minimal handling or intervention.

Winemaker's Tasting Notes

The nose on this shows the classic Howell Mountain blueberry profile along with a tremendous floral component of roses and violets along with grilled meats. On the palate it has wonderfully ripe and round tannin, especially for a Howell Mountain Cabernet. Hints of spearmint, cloves, wet earth along with a great mineral profile serves to focus the flavors further. Perhaps the most approachable Howell Mountain Cabernet we have made to date, it will need three years in the cellar (as opposed to the five that is normally needed to show their best). However, a day in a decanter will certainly help show a glimpse of the wine's very bright future.



"...reveals juicy, seductive aromas of red and black fruits intertwined with crushed rock, graphite, and flower notes. Medium to full-bodied with loads of texture and a heady, rich finish, this wine can be drunk now or cellared for 15-20 years."

Rated (93) by
Robert Parker, Jr.
"The Wine Advocate"