

T O R

TOR Cabernet Sauvignon To Kalon Clone 6, 2008

Blend: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Production: 207 cases
Release Date: January 2011

Vintage

The 2008 vintage has the potential to be one of Napa Valley's finest, yet most challenging vintages in recent memory. Our expert growers made more than 20 passes through their vineyards, and left a very small but very high quality crop. A few distinctive notes about the vintage—it was the second consecutive drought year and almost all of the rain came in January; the ground was dry by April. Spring was mostly remembered for an unbelievably long frost period, which influenced the set. Frost was the culprit for a severely reduced crop in most appellations. On Howell Mountain, we were not able to make a wine from our block of Cimarossa, mostly due to these conditions. We picked up two old, but extraordinary blocks in Andy Beckstoffer's To Kalon vineyard. Along with Mast, all our vineyards were 40 to 50 percent off normal crop yield. The fruit had an extraordinarily long hang time, as a result of the very long cool summer, with a heat spike in September, and a long Indian summer. It was an amazing growing season, but we had to work hard to bring out the best.

Vineyard

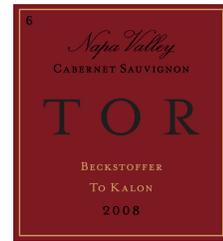
Our two-acre Clone 6 vineyard block is one of the few of its kind in To Kalon. It is the shyest bearing clone, rarely above two tons per acre, often less. Positioned in the western foothills of the vineyard, it is well drained, and faces roughly north south. This vineyard is located just south of Mondavi Winery on the west side of Highway 29, and slopes into the foothills. You could say it is the tenderloin vineyard cut out of the Oakville appellation.

Winemaking

Like the rest of our 2008 Cabernets our Clone 6 was made in the vineyard. We made multiple passes through the vineyard, opening up the canopy, removing the grapes that had ripened unevenly. We worked working towards what we knew would be a severely limited, but uniform crop. The grapes set early in the season, had a long hang time, and were picked with fully mature seeds and skins. Small berries and not a lot of them, excellent acids, and low PHs for such long hang time. We picked on October 2nd. In the winery we used indigenous yeasts, took our normal direction of unfiltered unfined, minimal handling through the aging process. We continue to work with small, excellent cooperages—all French. Our favorites for To Kalon are small Taransaud and Darnajou, yet we are always experimenting with one or two other coopers each year, for an extra spice. Minimal handling, we let the grapes talk.

Winemaker's Tasting Notes

On the nose this is very similar to the Clone 6 cabernets from 2005 through 2007 but just turned up to 11. Huge red cherry/mint/cassis and an almost fire-driven smoky quality. On the palate this wine leans slightly more towards the dark red fruit spectrum than does the clone 337. Massively intense red cherry/sweet oak/crushed rocks and an extremely focused minerality. There is always such a wonderful sense of continuity with the Clone 6 from To Kalon and this wine continues that but just at a level beyond any previous vintage.



"The brilliant 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer To-Kalon Vineyard Clone 6 again reveals the first-growth-like nobility and complexity of this phenomenal site in Oakville. Subtle toast/barrigue aromas intermixed with creme de cassis, licorice, incense and camphor are followed by a wine of tremendous intensity, full-bodied power, silky tannins and a long, rich, concentrated finish."

Rated 95
Robert Parker, Jr.
"The Wine Advocate"