

T O R

TOR Cabernet Sauvignon Cimarossa Vineyard, 2009

Blend: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Production: 300 cases
Release date: July 2011

Vintage

Almost perfection. Unlike the year before, frost was not an issue, weather was ideal for bud break, bloom and set. The growing season as a whole represents one of the most uniform I can remember with a minor heat spike in June, another in August, and none all the way thru harvest. The blemish came in the way of a mid-October wet storm, the tail end of a typhoon coming across the Pacific that dropped several inches of warm rain. Thankfully for us, Cimarossa had reached full maturity a week before the storm. We feel this is one of the best Cimarossa's to date. It has the power of the 2006 and the elegance of 2007.

Vineyards

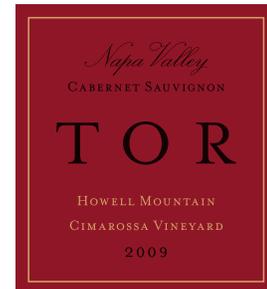
"Cimarossa" means 'red hill top' in Italian, which aptly defines this very special hillside vineyard, planted on a volcanic cinder cone. The elevation is 2,100 feet and the soils are predominately red volcanic rock and dust. Not much can be cultivated on these steep hills besides vines and some olive 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

As usual, our steep block required little thinning. The red, infertile soils set a small-berried crop, which we harvest early morning, and the grapes were de-stemmed still cold. The must was cold soaked until the indigenous yeast began to slowly metabolize grape sugar, signaling a beginning of fermentation. For the Cimarossa, soaks and fermentation lasted 21 days; the juice was then pressed off directly into small Taransaud French oak barrels. After 23 months in small oak, the wine went to bottle unfiltered, unfined. Net - net, minimal handling or intervention.

Winemaker's Tasting Notes

Wow. Very possibly the best young Howell Mountain Cabernet we have ever had. This wine combines the richness of the 2006 and the aromatic complexity/perfume of the 2005 and 2007. Massive and rich on the palate but with the sweetest and most fine grained Howell Mountain tannins so it does not taste as big as it is until you swallow and it is like you just drank a solid. Tremendous length on the finish with a finishing note of black fruits and sweet wood smoke.



"A deliciously complex, intriguing, exciting expression of Cabernet. Firm where it should be, with a subtle mix of acid and tannins. Generous and layered with spicy berry flavors that sail on and on."

97

James Laube
Wine Spectator
December 2011