



EPOCH ESTATE WINES

JEB DUNNUCK

Superstar winemaker Jordan Fiorentini continues to keep Epoch Estate near the top of the peak in Paso Robles, and these latest 2015s and 2016s are some of the finest wines I've tasted from her. These are classic Paso Roble's Rhône blends that mix the best of California sun and richness with a sense of purity, elegance, and balance. Don't miss them!

2015 Authenticity

99

My favorite of the bottled wines was the 2015 Authenticity and this crazy good red flirts with perfection. It's unquestionably one of the top 2-3 wines in the vintage. A blend of 81% Syrah and 19% Mourvèdre brought up in 77% new French oak (there's roughly 35% whole clusters), it boasts a huge nose of black fruits, olive tapenade, smoked meats, and truffle, and has an almost Cote Rotie La Landonne like meatiness and savoriness. With full body, sweet tannins, and an expansive, opulent, yet perfectly balanced profile on the palate, it's a heavenly Syrah from this great region. Don't miss it! (2018 – 2021)

2015 Block B

98

The 2015 Block B comes all from block 13 of the estate Paderewski Vineyard and is all Syrah that spent 19 months in 75% new French oak. I wrote "awesome" more than once in my notes and this deep, backward, almost primordial Syrah sports an inky purple color, sensational notes of black fruits, charred earth, iodine, graphite, and beef blood, full body, and a layered, balanced, seamless texture. It's another wine that's up with the crème de la crème of the vintage. Give bottles 1-3 years and it should cruise for a decade. (2018 – 2028)

2015 Creativity

95

A wine that changes vintage to vintage, the 2015 Creativity is made from 100% Petite Sirah (the 2014 was 100% Mourvèdre). This deep purple-colored effort was selected due to one of the fermentations standing out and Jordan opted to highlight it. Blueberries, camphor, and exotic spice notes all emerge from this shockingly elegant, layered Petite Sirah that has a beautiful mid-palate, silky tannins, no hard edges, and a great finish. I'd drink bottles over the coming decade, but I suspect it will keep even longer. (2018 – 2028)

2015 Estate Blend

95

What used to be the entry-level effort of the estate, the 2015 Estate Blend is year in, year out at an incredible quality level that it's hard to think of the wine those terms. The 2015 is 52% Syrah, 26% Mourvèdre, 13% Grenache, and the rest Tempranillo and Zinfandel, all from the Paderewski and Catapult vineyards on the west side of Paso Robles. It offers a terrific bouquet of black plums, ground pepper, charred meats and charcoal. Full-bodied, smoky, meaty, and rich, it stays light and graceful on the palate, with sweet tannins. I'd happily drink bottles anytime over the coming 7-8 years. (2018 – 2026)

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2015 Ingenuity

97

The inky colored 2015 Ingenuity (51% Syrah, 28% Mourvèdre, 14% Petite Sirah, and the balance Grenache) is another broad, layered, incredibly sexy wine from winemaker Joran Fiorentini. Offering up lots of smoked earth, ground pepper, exotic flowers, and assorted dark fruits, it opens up beautifully with time in the glass, has a layered, ultra-pure style, and a great, great finish. Drink it anytime over the coming decade. Bravo! (2018 - 2028)

2015 Mourvèdre

94

The 2015 Mourvèdre checks in as 75/25 split of Mourvèdre and Grenache that wasn't destemmed and brought up in a mix of vessels. It offers beautiful notes of black and blue fruits, ground pepper, leafy herbs, and assorted meatiness. With a ripe, layered, sexy style, as well as full-bodied richness and depth, drink it anytime over the coming decade. (2018 - 2028)

2015 Sensibility

95

Moving to the reds, the 2015 Sensibility is 96% Grenache and 4% Syrah that was aged 18 months in mostly neutral French oak puncheons, with 14% in concrete eggs. This medium ruby colored effort offers terrific notes of kirsch, blackberries, dried herbs, and earth, and it reminds me a top Chateauneuf du Pape from more sandy soils (Marcoux?). With medium to full body, a silky, rounded, elegant texture, and a great finish, it's a beautiful Grenache from these limestone hills. (After 2018)

2015 Tempranillo

98

I suspect the finest vintage to date, the 2015 Tempranillo shows a more elegant, seamless style that's reminiscent of some of the great Tempranillo releases from Spain. Tons of black fruits, charcoal, charred meats, and graphite notes all give way to a full-bodied red that has a weightless, seamless texture, building tannins, and a blockbuster finish. I haven't had a truly aged Tempranillo from California, so I hate to push too hard on the aging curve (especially when it's this good already), but I suspect this will have over two decades of longevity. (2018 - 2028)

2015 Veracity

97

The GSM of the estate, the 2015 Veracity checks in as 47% Grenache, 34% Mourvèdre, and 19% Syrah that was brought up in a mix of concrete tanks, neutral barrels, and 24% new barrels. Deep ruby/purple-colored, with a kaleidoscope of blackberries, leafy herbs, pepper, underbrush, and spice aromas and flavors, this beauty hits the palate with awesome purity of fruit, building richness, and ultra-fine tannins. It's a tour de force in Rhône blends from California that I wish every reader could taste. (After 2018)

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2015 Zinfandel

95

The 2015 Zinfandel (there 3% Grenache in the blend) comes all from the estate Paderewski vineyard and offers a terrific, classic Zinfandel style in its plums, blackberries, cedar, incense, and exotic spice-laced bouquet. This carries to a full-bodied, elegant, layered Zinfandel that has terrific mid-palate depth, no hard edges, and perfect balance. This beauty picks up hints of earth and caramelized meats with time in the glass and is a thrilling effort that will keep for 10-15 years.

2016 Authenticity

96-98

I love the barrel sample of the 2016 Authenticity and this beauty offers up a crazy complex style with its assorted darker berry fruits, plums, smoked earth, violets, bay leaf, and hints of stems. Possessing full-bodied richness and depth, fabulous purity, and a layered, multi-dimensional texture, it's going to play with the top wines in the vintage.

2016 Block B

96-98

The same can be said from the 2016 Block B and this is another blockbuster vintage from this cuvee. Also, all Syrah from a tiny block in the Paderewski Vineyard, this beauty offers a thrilling blue fruit quality as well as notes of violets and crushed rocks, full body, ultra-fine tannins, and great intensity and purity. It has plenty of structure, yet I suspect it will be reasonably approachable on release.

2016 Ingenuity

93-95+

The 2016 Ingenuity includes slightly more Petite Sirah than normal but is still a classic Syrah, Petite Sirah, Mourvèdre and Grenache blend. It sports a vivid purple color as well as a dense, backward, closed yet oh so promising style. Giving up plenty of blue fruits, lots of graphite and minerality, full body, and notable yet ripe structure, it will unquestionably be a fabulous wine.

2016 Mourvèdre

94-96

The 2016 Mourvèdre is a tiny production release that was first releases under this name in 2015. Prior to that, it was always put into the Creativity bottling. This beauty gives up lots of blue fruits, violets, pepper, and tons of earthy minerality as well as a powerful, full-bodied yet elegant style on the palate. There's plenty of Mourvèdre structure sitting under its fruit and I suspect a year or two of bottle age will be your friend.

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2016 Sensibility

94-97

The Grenache dominated 2016 Sensibility is a rockstar in the making. It offers loads of kirsch and blackberry fruits intermixed with notions of herbes de Provence, dried violets, and spice. This seamless, full-bodied effort has awesome purity, as well as elegance, while still packing some serious intensity.

2016 Tempranillo

94-96

The 2016 Tempranillo is for patient consumers. Tons of black fruits, chocolate, and graphite notes all give way to a full-bodied, mineral-laced, rich, chewy red wine that has terrific depth of fruit, beautiful balance, and building structure. Hide bottles for at least 2-3 years, at which point it should cruise for a decade or more.

2016 Veracity

94-95

The 2016 Veracity is mostly Mourvèdre that blended with 36% Grenache and 13% Syrah. It offers a complex, exotic bouquet of cranberries, currants, strawberries, leafy herbs, and earth. Deep, rich, and layered on the palate, it has solid structure, as well as length.

2016 Zinfandel

94-96

Moving to the wines from barrel, the 2016 Zinfandel (there's some Carignan in the blend) offers perfumed blue fruits, incense, and dried flowers notes in its layered, pure, seamless profile. It shows the purity of the vintage front and center and should drink nicely right out of the gate.

2017 Rosé

91

The 2017 Rose is also fabulous and will give a top rose from Bandol a run for its money. Made from 48% Mourvèdre, 28% Grenache and the rest Syrah, it offers a light pink color as well as terrific notes of strawberries, orange peel, and fresh flowers. It's clean, crisp, and pure on the palate with bright acidity, and it's a terrific rose to drink over the coming 6-12 months. (After 2018)

2017 White

93

I always love the white from this estate and the 2017 White (48% Viognier, 40% Grenache Blanc, and the rest Roussanne) is another winner. White flowers, stone fruits, citrus, and a distinct salty minerality all emerge from this elegant, incredibly pure, finesse-oriented white that will keep for 3-4 years. (2018 - 2022)

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