

A Close Look at Paso Robles CAB Collective

By, Touring & Tasting

September 23, 2014

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For lovers of Cabernet and other Bordeaux varietals, Paso Robles, California, is a fascinating new frontier. I say this with confidence, because I recently participated in a side-by-side tasting of eight Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignons. Very impressive! Each of the eight wines was produced by a winery that’s joined the Paso Robles CAB Collective, a nonprofit group of leading Paso Robles growers and producers of Cabernet and red Bordeaux varietals. This group’s goal is to work as a team to produce superior quality, classic, and age-worthy wines that compete on a global stage.

It’s not that Paso doesn’t already produce these grapes. Of the 26,000-plus acres of grapevines currently planted in Paso Robles, around 55 percent is planted with Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varieties. However, the Paso Robles CAB Collective is raising its own bar. Group members communicate frequently and collaborate on a range of topics from soil composition, clonal selection, and winery practices, all with the objective of producing wines that demonstrate the full potential of the Paso Robles region.

And what is that potential? Considering the terroir, which has been defined as exceptional, the sky is the limit. For one thing, Paso Robles has unique calcareous soils that provide a natural balance in acidity, and its consistent temperature pattern (a huge diurnal swing of around 40 degrees Fahrenheit) aids in the development of flavors and balanced acidities vintage after vintage. Plus, Paso Robles vintners have a true community farming spirit. They work together to achieve a better product and a better reputation for their region.

Each spring, Paso Robles CAB Collective hosts a multi-day event for lovers of CAB, bringing together the region’s top CAB producers for not-to-be missed experiences, including a grand tasting of all its members’ wines, winemaker dinners, and winery events. It’s already on my calendar for next year! For now, I’m checking the group’s website. The list of members is growing rapidly and so is Paso’s reputation for Cabs and Bordeaux of distinction. Watch for these wines! For a trail map and more, visit pasoroblescab.com. ~ W. van Diver