



JAMES SUCKLING.COM 

“L’Aventure’s Paso Robles Willow Creek District Côte à Côte 2020, a blend of 45 percent grenache, 30 percent syrah and 25 percent mourvèdre, was the standout among the wineries’ many blended wines and cabernet sauvignons.

Asseo underscored the importance of looking at polyphenolic maturity before harvest, and not just at Brix levels. And thanks to the cool nights in Willow Creek District, L’Aventure generally harvests around two weeks later than Chateauneuf-du-Pape in France, he said. “To achieve the maturity of polyphenols, we need to keep the fruit longer on the vines because of the cool nights here that generate high acidity. Of course, you also have to think about your yeast, and most yeast will die at 16 percent alcohol, but you must put everything into context.”

Asseo settled in Paso around 25 years ago and established L’Aventure Winery after selling Chateau Fleur Cardinale in Saint-Emilion, where he was put off by the rigid AOC regulations. His signature blend of syrah, cabernet sauvignon and petit verdot is his best response as to why he left Saint-Emilion, where such combinations can’t even be attempted.

Both his Optimus and Estate Cuvée are blends of the three varieties, while Côte a Côte is greache-syrah-mourvedre blend that pays tribute to Chateauneuf-du-Pape. With outstanding balance, you barely feel the heat in these deep and opulent yet fresh and racy reds.”

ESTATE CUVÉE BLANC 2021

TASTING DATE 9/23/2022 RATING **94**

Limey, mineral nose with a floral hint. Textured and crisp, medium-bodied on the palate with fresh, medium acidity. Very subtle and nuanced showing elegance and fine composition. 60% roussanne, 20% viognier, 20% grenache blanc. Drink now.

OPTIMUS 2020

TASTING DATE 9/23/2022 RATING **94**

Grilled meat, bacon fat, tobacco and olives to the nose that follow through to a medium- to full-bodied palate with rich, creamy tannins. 58% syrah, 31% cabernet sauvignon, 11% petit verdot. Drink now or hold.

ESTATE CUVÉE 2020

TASTING DATE 9/23/2022 RATING **96**

Really impressive depth here. Violets, blueberries, blackberries, graphite, ink and chalk to the nose. Rich, voluptuous and flavorful with firm, but silky tannins. Concentrated, restrainedly plush and muscular with a lingering finish that goes on and on. 45% syrah, 40% cabernet sauvignon and 15% petit verdot.

CÔTE À CÔTE 2020

TASTING DATE 9/23/2022 RATING **97**

I love the depth and the mineral quality of this. Dark cherries, black licorice, iodine, graphite, oyster shells and hot stones. Quite vertical yet broad, with super fine but present tannins. Long, seductive yet quite focused, too. A stunner from L’Aventure. 45% grenache, 30% syrah and 25% mourvedre. Drink or hold.

LES DEMOISELLES 2020

TASTING DATE 9/23/2022 RATING **95**

An intense, meaty mourvedre and syrah blend with dark cherries, asphalt, blackberries. Rich, juicy and flavorful on the palate with lots of fine tannins. Nicely generous, but still fresh and racy. 90% mourvedre and 10% syrah. Drink or hold.

INSPIRACIÓN 2020

TASTING DATE 9/23/2022 RATING **95**

Quite racy and rich nose with dried strawberries, asphalt and black raspberries. Firm yet polished tannins proceed in a linear set, going all the way through to the end with lovely sweet fruit. Full-bodied and quite long. 49% grenache, 32% cabernet sauvignon, 13% syrah and 6% grenache blanc co-fermented. Drink or hold.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2020

TASTING DATE 9/23/2022 RATING **95**

Deep, ripe but racy at the same time with creme de cassis, dark olives, black chocolate and cigar box. Flavorful and full-bodied with really fine-grained tannins. Dimensional and structured. An exuberant, zealous Paso cabernet sauvignon that shows varietal typicity and place. Drink or hold.