



2006 CABERNET SAUVIGNONS THE LOIN & NUCLEUS

Both from
Estelle Vineyard
Santa Ynez Valley

Winemaker's Notes:

I think both of these wines are great. Having come from sections in the Estelle Vineyard not too far apart, there is definitely a kinship between the two. At the same time they are quite different.

THE LOIN is all about simplicity and isolation. The *loin* is always the leanest and one of the most sought after cuts of meat. It's not usually ground into hamburger. It's pure.

When I first saw the 12 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon that sit on the beautiful little rock showered hillside at the highest point at the Estelle Vineyard, it struck me the same way. It's beautiful, and it needs nothing else to be that way. The soil is shallow and lean, and it produces a very distinctive Cabernet Sauvignon.

NUCLEUS, on the other hand, is more about diversity. It comprises a larger section of the Estelle Vineyard and has four clones of Cabernet Sauvignon, a nice chunk of Merlot, and, starting to mature in 2006, some very special Petit Verdot. Interestingly, NUCLEUS is located in the crux of a turning point of some of Figueroa Mountain's foothills. Along Roblar Avenue, these hills, which represent the first point at which the deep alluvial Santa Ynez Valley floor transcends into mountains, run east-west. Right at NUCLEUS they turn and start to run north-south as they parallel Mora Road. While it is interesting, is it really significant? I don't know. But I do like the idea of geological formations butting up against each other, with all kinds of cool rocks and stuff upwelling at that point. It's like a point of tension, and I like making wines from these kinds of places.

Another part of my concept is that the *nucleus* of a living cell is its headquarters. It's the inspiration, so to speak, that motivates and activates all the operations of the cell, as well as how that cell communicates to all the other cells around it. In Italy, all roads lead to Rome. Historically, Rome was the artistic and cultural center of the universe. Some day, when the first twenty or so years of this century are looked back upon as the beginning of a new epoch in the production of fine Cabernet Sauvignon in the Santa Ynez Valley, I believe it will be the largest section, making the best wine at the Estelle Vineyard, that will be thought of as one of this epoch's epicenters, its motivating force, its nucleus. Nucleus will be then for Cabernet Sauvignon in Santa Ynez what the Sanford and Benedict Vineyard is now for Pinot Noir in the Sta. Rita Hills.

THE LOIN is about the primitive; one Cabernet in one dirt.

NUCLEUS is about design, exploration and the future.

THE LOIN is the answer as to why the French use mostly Cabernet Sauvignon in Bordeaux.

NUCLEUS is the answer as why they blend.

Babcock

WINERY & VINEYARDS

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From the 2006 vintage, both wines are approachable right now. Mixed into THE LOIN'S plum/black cherry nose is an irony, flinty quality. Its super earthy, like you can almost smell those beautiful rocks that are laced into its soil. It also has an exotic allspice and clove expression that I think some day will be recognized as a classic expression of Cabernet that is grown the interior of the Santa Ynez Valley. The tannins are prevalent, but soft and dusty. THE LOIN with a loin would taste real good right now.

NUCLEUS' nose is typically more about boysenberry and violets. There is also a bit of this flintiness that THE LOIN has. If there's spice I'd say its vanilla and maybe a pinch of nutmeg. But the spice seems built around the fruit, as opposed to THE LOIN, whose fruit seems built around its spice and earth. While many wineries blend in Merlot to soften a Cabernet, I think it is interesting to note that the Merlot thus far in NUCLEUS has been very concentrated. It has been perfectly farmed and picked dead ripe. It's the kind of stuff that has been worthy of being bottled by itself. I am not using it here to dilute the Cabernet Sauvignon. Rather, I am blending it in to bring forward my concept of “NUCLEUS”.

Cheers,
Bryan