

“A Paradigm Shift”

PATRIMONY ESTATE
ADDS AN ENTIRELY
NEW DIMENSION TO
PASO ROBLES' WINE
INDUSTRY

by Randy Caparoso

PATRIMONY winemaker and co-proprietor Daniel Daou stands atop the site of the brand's future winery facility at an elevation of 2,200 feet; DAOU Mountain can be seen in the background.

The first thing to know about PATRIMONY Estate is that it isn't merely an extension of DAOU Vineyards & Winery in Paso Robles. Think of NASA's Gemini and Apollo space programs: Like the former, DAOU laid the groundwork for further exploration of the appellation by doing more to elevate the profile of Paso Cabernet Sauvignon than any other brand since its first vintage in 2010. But PATRIMONY Estate takes more than a step beyond its sibling as far as expressing the Bordelaise quality of the terroir goes—it represents the giant leap that has landed proprietors Daniel and Georges Daou on a proverbial moon.

The inaugural PATRIMONY Estate releases were all sourced from DAOU Mountain, which ranges from 1,700 to 2,200 feet in elevation in the Adelaida District AVA. The brand is being handled as completely separate from DAOU, with its own sales and marketing team. Moreover, the wines it produces are much more intense and demonstrative of their terroir than their DAOU predecessors. Daniel has been describing PATRIMONY as a “paradigm shift”—something so new, so startlingly different, that it may even surprise Cabernet Sauvignon devotees already familiar with Paso Robles.

As he explains, “When you look at Cabernet Sauvignons and Bordeaux [wines], the objective way of measuring the quality of the best vintages has always been to look at phenolics”—that is, the total amount of anthocyanins (pigments) and tannins derived from grape skins contributing to the color, smell, and taste of red wines. Accordingly, the PATRIMONY team has “checked the phenolics of Cabernet Sauvignons from every major region in the world. In great vintages, phenolic content generally measures 30–50% higher than in average vintages. On DAOU Mountain, the phenolics are off the charts every year—something never before seen in the wine world.”

Reflecting their quality, all of the PATRIMONY Estate wines will retail for a suggested price of \$275, in comparison to the \$50–\$150 range of DAOU Reserve bottlings. Meanwhile, the Daous have just broken ground on another property within the Adelaida District, encompassing 270 acres atop a ridge that's separated from the DAOU Mountain estate by a rugged canyon. “The new estate will be dedicated to PATRIMONY,” says Daniel. “We're planting 70 acres in similar style to what we've successfully done on DAOU Mountain, with vine spacing at 6-by-2 feet, each vine cropped for minimal yield with 5-foot canopies to maximize photosynthesis.”



PHOTO: RANDY CAPAROSO



DAOU Mountain, where PATRIMONY is currently produced, ranges from 1,700 to 2,200 feet in elevation in Paso Robles' Adelaida District AVA.

In 2022, construction will begin on a winemaking and hospitality facility at the top of the estate, which, at 2,200 feet in elevation, is in “direct line of sight of DAOU Mountain,” Daniel says. A chateau adjoining the winery will house eight master suites so that guests can stay for multiday experiences complete with farm-to-table dinners. “If all goes well, we’ll be receiving our first PATRIMONY guests by 2024, when all the vines will be three to four years old and in full production.”

The site boasts other assets in addition to its relatively high elevation. “Temperature-wise, we get lower highs and higher lows than anywhere else in Paso Robles,” Daniel explains, “and vines are planted in over 90% calcareous clay, primarily in the Linne Calodo and Nacimiento soil series.” Most of the Cabernet Sauvignon will be planted on the lower slopes, where loamier clay “gives us maximum phenolics. This may be the only appellation in California where we are at 2,200 feet yet only 13 miles from the ocean.”

As young as the label is, Daniel is already confident that “when people try PATRIMONY, they’ll have a hard time going back to other wines. When I do blind tastings, I can tell which is my wine just by looking at them. I call it a rare phenomenon because it really is.” Not that higher phenolics are always preferable, he acknowledges: “You can overextract phenolics to a point where a wine is undrinkable. We extract only to a point where wine is perfectly balanced, using just free-run, never any pressed, wine. While *élevage* [takes place] in the finest custom-made oak in the world, our goal is to achieve a point where wood never comes between a wine and flavor. The style of PATRIMONY is always about elegance, which we’ve found we can achieve after about 30 months in oak, when you get the longest-chain tannins.”

To make his case, Daniel pours his PATRIMONY Cabernet Sauvignon from the 2016 vintage—an ultra-deep and opaque wine that’s dense and tautly wired yet velvety-smooth and seamless from bow to stern. It’s as concentrated as any Cabernet Sauvignon-based red in the world and as pure an expression of Paso Robles, and specifically Adelaida District, fruit as you can find. Everything in its place, faithful to its origin, fulfilling its inherent promise: *That’s PATRIMONY.* **VL**

TASTING NOTES

It has been proven that the phenolics on DAOU Mountain, in the heart of the Paso Robles’ prestigious Adelaida District, are among the highest in the world. This speaks to the depth of color, potency of flavor, and tremendous structure it imparts in its wines.

Daniel Daou has, from the beginning, led a pioneering effort in Paso Robles to create Bordeaux varieties in an inimitable style. His newest project, PATRIMONY, is a cosmos unto itself: Setting the standard for a California “first-growth” Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, these wines exhibit character that is as loyal to the terroir as it is unique on the world stage. —*Meridith May*



PATRIMONY 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Adelaida District, Paso Robles (\$275) Creamy, silky, and intense, this startlingly

inky-black liquid exudes aromas of tilled soil, leather, soy sauce, and black plum. Tannins coat the tongue with coffee-chocolate grit that’s smoothed out by ripe blackberry and heather. Dense and sturdy, the body remains ethereal, saturating the palate with anise, dark chocolate, and espresso. Aged for 30 months in the finest French oak barrels. **99**



PATRIMONY 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Adelaida District, Paso Robles (\$305) Grainy tannins take hold as the dense

liquid saturates the palate with pencil shavings, cocoa powder, and roasted coffee. Licorice coats the tongue as would a fine Sambuca, making for an unctuous and hedonistic experience. A profusion of blackberry preserves and a hint of coconut surface, connecting to the wine’s inner brawn before sweetening and mollifying themselves on the exquisite finish. **98**



PATRIMONY 2018 Caves des Lions, Adelaida District, Paso Robles (\$275) Earthy scents of truffle and licorice tempt

the palate, encouraging further investigation. Mint coats a deep, rich blackberry core. Black-tea and dark-chocolate tannins wrap around the tongue as crushed stone intertwines with dried heather, creating a chalky sensation. This blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Cab Franc is almost more Bordeaux-like than Paso—but it’s arguably more Paso than any other wine in the world. **100**



Patrimony 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Adelaida District, Paso Robles (\$275)

With a prolonged hang time – and the latest harvest to date on Daou Mountain – this 100% Cabernet Sauvignon is not only concentrated, but silky and ultra-generous in fruit and aromatics. The dazzling texture of Devil’s Food cake, boysenberry preserves, offers a most sensual mouthfeel that is more of a caress than a grip. The wine’s inherent calcareous nature weaves its chalky minerality through a field of violets and sweet tobacco. Aged 30 months in an assortment of high end French oak barrels, with extra tight grain and a medium-long toast. **100**