



2004 Blankiet Estate, Cabernet Sauvignon, Paradise Hills Vineyard

Review by Robert Parker

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Rating: **96** points

There are just over 1000 cases of the Cabernet Sauvignon, which is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from the hillsides of the Blankiet Estate. The 2004 looks to be as good as they have made to date, although the 2003 was showing exceptional potential from bottle. The 2004 has an inky/purple color and a big, sweet nose of graphite, scorched earth, plums, licorice, blackberry, and cassis with some tasty, high-quality oak. Extremely opulent, full-bodied, dense, and pure, this is striking Cabernet and one of the densest, richest wines I have tasted from this vintage, a year that has a tendency to be somewhat charming and superficial, but lacks concentration. Boasting delicious fudge-like aromas intermixed with blackberry, coffee bean, and pain grille scents, this super-rich, full-bodied effort displays a Graves-like, volcanic, scorched earth/hot stone element in its flavors. Both 2004s have put on considerable weight and performed significantly stronger out of bottle than they did from cask. Because of low acidity, sweet ripeness, and velvety tannin, this wine should be drinkable upon release but hit its stride in 4-5 years and last for two decades.

As I have written before, the only way readers are going to get any of this wine is to be on the mailing list or check out one of the few restaurants that receives an allocation.

This is an amazing operation on the hillsides overlooking the huge Dominus/Napanook estate. A complex set of caves and a remarkable, nearly surreal chateau grace the property. Winemaker Helen Turley, working with her viticulturalist husband, John Wetlaufer, is fashioning some spectacular wines from these hillsides of volcanic ash and basalt. These are big, structured, potentially long-lived wines that will need some cellar time for those lucky enough to latch onto a few bottles. Everything to date has been aged in 100% new Taransaud barrels for 18-19 months and then bottled unfiltered.