

## Diamond Series



### L'Aventure

His route toward becoming a successful winery owner in California might be considered as somewhat circuitous, but French-born Stephan Asseo makes a serious point when explaining his current role as owner of L'Aventure.

"Life is truly a great adventure," he recently related. "You are faced with a series of challenges and decisions, and what you do ultimately guides your life."

Asseo, 50, won a scholarship in 1982 to the highly regarded L'Ecole Oenologique de Macon, Burgundy's great wine school. After graduation, he found prices on land in Burgundy extremely high so he opted for Bordeaux and its storied collection of great Chateaux. A close friend owned a Chateau in Pomerol, a small appellation and home to the marvelous Chateau Petrus and Asseo set about learning to make wines. Along the way, he also developed the reputation of a maverick Bordeaux winemaker.

In 1996, Stephan Asseo felt hampered by the strict rules of Bordeaux appellation and decided to see a new venue for his winemaking talents. He eventually came to California and looked at both Napa Valley and Sonoma. He sought a perfect terroir for his new venture, but availability and price forced him to continue his quest. He next tried Monterey County and finally explored the area around western Paso Robles where he finally found "a perfect place on which to grow my great assortment of vines." In the mind of Asseo, the rolling topography of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range with deep calcareous soils, along with the maritime influence of the renowned Templeton Gap all combine to produce a

world-class wine growing location, with the potential to craft some of the world's greatest blends.

He considers his move to "Paso" as he calls it, "as just following my instincts. I knew what I wanted and finally found it. The soils were wonderful and the analysis that followed proved I was right about the spot. I had no initial idea about ocean influence, which has proved to be really important. The area produces extremely long cycles for the vines and makes for grapes with deep maturation."

The 68-acre tract was planted in numerous varietals that produced a total of 58 individual one-acre blocks, each carefully

delineated by Asseo. He uses a number of blends for his wines, a fact that sets him apart from most of his Paso Robles growing and wine-producing neighbors.

Stephan Asseo calls his phrase "the Paso Blend." The term is gaining momentum among local vintners that have embraced the marketing idiom in the fiercely competitive California wine market. As originator of the term, Asseo reaps the benefit of its success.

L'Aventure's first release of nearly 2,000 cases came in 1998 and was

greeted with a great deal of early success. The wines have continued to gain momentum and L'Aventure now ranks high among the Central Coast's list of top wineries. Excellent scores and awards have followed L'Aventure's wines throughout the winery's relatively short history.

Since 2008, all of L'Aventure's releases have earned estate status, part of Stephan Asseo's initial plan for the winery. "I want to be able to produce a little bit of everything, he



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Stephen Asseo — Owner



explained further. “I have the grapes to easily produce a Bordeaux blend or a Chateaufeuf du Pape blend. But I don’t want my wines to be a copy of either. L’Aventure is basically a family vineyard that is unlike any other in the area. I have very little ego, and I prefer to let my wines speak for themselves.”

Asseo also admits to feeling more passion than business about his winery, a rather unique sentiment in the wine business. He has leveled off production at around 8,000 cases and will continue at that level in the foreseeable future.

“Since I do practically all the work at L’Aventure myself,” he explained, “our current level allows me to have complete control of our quality. I think we are still breaking new ground with our wines and I still have some surprises for the future. After all, with a name like L’Aventure to work with, it would seem reasonable that our adventure would never end, right?”

The wines of Stephan Asseo and L’Aventure bring an adventuresome spirit to both the central Coast Region and to all of California’s premier wine-producing areas. Asseo is a true pioneer at a time when revolutionary winemaking and innovative wine introduction is a more than risky enterprise. L’Aventure is to be commended for their efforts.

## Accolades and Tasting Notes



**L’Aventure 2007 Estate Cuvée**

**95-Points, Robert Parker** — “Composed of 49% Syrah, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, and the balance of Petit Verdot, the 2007 Estate Cuvée is a blockbuster. A seamlessly built, multidimensional effort, it boasts a black/blue color as well as a gorgeous perfume of graphite, charcoal, blueberry and blackberry liqueur, truffles, bouquet garni, and a subtle hint of oak. Superb texture and power in addition to a seamless integration of acidity, alcohol, tannin, and wood suggest it will evolve for 10-15 years.”

*Winemaker Notes* — Opaque ebony center, purple margins. Powerful, complex aromas of graphite, “viande,” dark fruit, licorice, tea-leaf...have we forgotten anything? Spicy notes introduced in the aroma linger like cloves and sage in a rich tapestry of flavors that include wild blackberry, tar, gooseberry, and acacia. The length of the finish is memorable. You really need to try this wine for yourself— words do not do it justice!

## Reorder

The spirit of L’Aventure is most evident in Stephen Asseo’s ultra luxurious Estate Cuvée, in which the blending of premium varietals increases the authenticity, complexity, and balance. With a legacy of 91+ ratings from Robert Parker since 2000 (garnering a score as high as 98 Points in 2004!), the Estate Cuvée has consistently been of superior quality and aptly showcases Asseo’s world-class winning talents.

Winery Direct: \$85.00

**Diamond Series Price:**

2-Bottle members.....\$76.00 / bottle

4-Bottle Members &

Multi-Series Members...\$72.00 / bottle

(Plus shipping)

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