



CONTINUUM
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FROM THE NOTEBOOK

How is Continuum? It is a masterful work in progress - by design, clearly, because the vineyard source has been shifting. But the template remains largely the same: a big dose of Cabernet Sauvignon, a healthy addition of Cabernet Franc and a bit of Petit Verdot for structure and color.

The 2007 Continuum (\$140) comes primarily from the To Kalon site, with about 15 percent from the estate. At 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 22 percent Cabernet Franc and 18 percent Petit Verdot, it receives 100 percent new oak.

As a young wine, the wood is evident. It's hefty, lavish and packed with graphite, black olive and peppery Franc aromatics, plus deep kirsch and black cherry - a more overt effort that wears the To Kalon signature of rich black fruit. That To Kalon mark often falls prey to a Napa tendency to take a good thing too far. Continuum takes it just far enough; it's a well-executed powerhouse.

By contrast, the 2008 Continuum (\$150; to be released in March) is predominantly an estate effort, with 70 percent of the fruit from Pritchard Hill. The proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon rises to 71 percent and there's a touch of Merlot, with a bit less new oak.

The result is far more perfumed and fresh, with smoked tobacco leaf and dried flower scents and bright huckleberry and cassis flavors. There's a much purer fruit signature, with sinewy tannins and a dark-stone mineral presence that already shows tremendous potential to age. As a sign of the project's future, it shows Tim Mondavi's wisdom in moving across the valley and up to the hills.

- *Jon Bonné*
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CONTINUUM