

**Domaine de la Terre Rouge****2003 Tête-à-tête
(Sierra Foothills)**

I knew the minute I stuck my nose in this brown-bagged wine that I liked it a whole lot, and there was going to be a story. Dry dusty herbs, bay leaf, cedar and raspberry wafting over a wine with the unfiltered (and un"enhanced") color of old pinot; not an old wine, per se, but definitely a step back in time in terms of craftsmanship. Then came much the same melded spice box on the palate, with fine (as distinct from "soft") tannins and a texture that fell short of concentration, and delivered all the more complexity for it. I assumed it was Rhone...*real Rhone*, not diaspora Rhone. Notably it lacked the alcoholic heat of most of the over-ripened diaspora West Coast "Rhones" I've tasted in recent years. Nope, here it was, a fine

example of terroir-driven French country wine. Definitely! I had this puppy nailed just as sure as some critics know their "89"s from their "90"s.

Off comes the brown bag...*oops!* Alcohol 14.5%...Sierra Foothills appellation. So what do I know? Well, I know that proprietor-winemaker Bill Easton is "old school" and has the good sense to not push his wines into the jam-jar idiom, currently so fashionable. And, though I don't know how, I do know this wine can hold its alcohol... Easton's Tête-à-tête walks a perfectly strait breathalyzer line of balance.

Reviewed April 20, 2007 by [Roger Dial](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Domaine de la Terre Rouge](#)

Vintage: 2003

Wine: Tête-à-tête

Appellation: [Sierra Foothills](#)

Grapes: [Mourvedre](#) / [Mataro](#) (70%), [Syrah](#) / [Shiraz](#) (19%), [Grenache](#) (11%)

Price: \$12.99

THE REVIEWER**Roger Dial**

Under various hats

(winegrower/maker/negotiant/writer)

Roger Dial has been tasting wine professionally for 40 years. He regards varietal and regional diversity as the best virtues of wine, and is ever-suspicious of the quest (by producers

and critics, alike) for "universal greatness". His tasting regime is simple: Is the wine technically sound? Is it interesting? Warning: he's a sucker for all aromatic varieties.