



Appellation: Napa Valley

44 lots hand-harvested and vinified separately: 20 lots selected for Cain Five

Harvest Dates	September 24 through October 26, 1999
Total time in Barrel	21 months
Production	61,527 ~ 750 ml bottles
Release Date	January 1, 2003
Suggested Retail	\$85 per bottle

I don't think that we'll ever "figure out" how to make Cain Five. Each vintage is a process of discovery. 1999 is the second in a series of three late vintages. After 1998, we thought we had the problems of a late harvest figured out. But, when we were in the middle of it, nothing seemed easy, and nothing was the same. As I wrote last year, the keys to these vintages were patience, nerves of steel, and uncompromising selection. Each spring, the buds opened late, in mid-April, presaging an October harvest. But this year, the harvest was just enough earlier (10 days to two weeks) to make the critical difference in ripening our hillside fruit. We picked mainly in October and in some cases, at the last possible moment. October was sunny, warm, and dry until the 27th when we received 2 inches of rain, officially marking the end of what turned out to be a very good harvest.

Our winemaking is simple: We believe that red wine is a partial extraction of the grape, and our goal is to get what we want and to leave the rest behind. Hand-picked fruit, gentle destemming, whole berries, native yeast, thoughtful maceration (10 days to 5 weeks in the tank), manual pressing, lot-by-lot evaluation of press wine, malolactic fermentation in barrels, early blending, barrel-to-barrel racking, careful use of egg whites for fining (half an egg white per barrel in 1999), bottling without filtration—these are all elements of our winemaking at Cain.

As always, we compose the blend following three essential desiderata: Complexity, Balance, and Persistence. Moderate yields, moderate temperatures, and complete but slow ripening gave us wines with depth, concentration, and a solid core of dense, age worthy tannins. These are the hallmarks of mountain fruit: 65 percent of this wine was grown on Spring Mountain; about one-third of this vintage was grown in our estate vineyard. These wines allowed us to create a Cain Five that is balanced and flowing, with a firm beginning, middle, and end. The nose is subtle and complex: notes of cedar, blackberries, and roasted nuts draw one into the glass, where a sweet entry awaits. Weight on the palate suggests constrained intensity, which leads to a well-defined finish that seems to be just waiting to blossom in the years to come.

Christopher Howell, Winemaker/General Manager