



Harvest & Varietal Information

VINEYARDS: Rutherford: 86% Atlas Peak: 14%
Morisoli Borges, Hudson, Garvey, Beckstoffer—George III, Stagecoach
VARIETIES: 69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Petit Verdot, 14% Merlot
PRODUCTION: 2,238 cases RELEASE DATE: September 1, 2015

Low yields, moderate ripeness, and balanced wines have always been our goal. For precisely these reasons, although 2011 is well known to have been a “difficult” vintage in Northern California, it worked out just fine for us at Cain.

2011 was a year for low yields and moderate vigor—which is to say it was a year for the Benchlands. It is the difficult years that reveal the potential of the best vineyards and demonstrate the choices we make. It’s true that we had to work at it. Spring came late and it was rainy (with today’s drought, how soon we forget that rain). Conditions conspired toward a poor flowering and consequent poor set. A good thing too, since everything got off to a late start, that there was less fruit to ripen. Despite the low yields, all the serious growers had to selectively thin their crop in order to ensure more uniform ripening. Also, in mid-September, it was important to pull a few leaves that we would ordinarily want to keep to shade the clusters. Only this time we needed light and air movement around the berries. As a cool, moist October settled in, we waited patiently for the last possible moment to pick. On the cusp of the rains, even on that very morning, we brought the grapes in. But if the fruit wasn’t ready, we were prepared to wait out the rains of early October and watch the true ripening continue. Fortunately, the weather cooperated—the second half of October was beautiful. After many vintages, we know our vineyards and how they ripen. We know all the things to do and when to do them—that’s what we did in 2011. Experience counts.

In the cellar we’ve learned to work with each vintage on its own terms. We’ve learned not to “correct” problems or deficiencies. Rather, we respect what is offered and allow the fruit to release the best of what it has. When grapes ripen slowly and gently, as they did in 2011, that’s not difficult. True, in that cool fall, we did have to warm up the tanks so that the native yeast would start fermenting. And we had to keep the cellar warm so that the fermentations would complete. As always, we get the new wines into barrel early so they can begin to sort out. Then, when we composed the blend in the spring, it was important to make a judicious selection of the most complete and harmonious wines. Nothing in this is unusual for Cain—that’s what we’ve always done.

So, there’s not a lot of 2011, but we like it.

Christopher Howell, Wine-Grower/GM

For information on our other two wines—Cain Five and Cain Cuvée, please visit our website.