



Harvest & Varietal Information

Vineyard: 100% Cain Vineyard, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley

Varieties: 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 8% Malbec, 7% Petit Verdot

Production: 4,977 (9L) cases Release Date: September 1, 2018

Estate Grown—Estate Bottled

2014 Cain Five is, quite simply, the most beautiful wine ever to have come from the Cain Vineyard. We've simplified the label, too. No more clutter of varietal percentages. All you really need to know is that the Cain Five came from the Cain Vineyard: estate grown—estate bottled—harvested and vinified in 2014. If you know anything about this wine, you'll know that it is a Cabernet Blend of five varieties (hence, Cain Five), but the most important thing is that it grew in just one place: the Cain Vineyard. Five Varieties—One Vineyard. Simple.

Of all the myriad wines in the world, the ones that matter most are those that speak of place—and reflect where they grew. They are distinctive—they speak with a clear voice of a particular place, the location, the slope, the exposure, and the soil in which the vines have put down roots for decades. This is what the French call, Terroir.

Once you've visited the Cain Vineyard, you'll know that it looks like no place else, so it makes sense that the Cain Five should taste like nothing else. Surely some of the factors have to do with the steep slopes, the thin clay soils, the high mountain elevation above the valley inversion, and the aromatic plants and forest that embrace our vineyard plots and fill most of our watershed. But the truth is, we don't really know. All we do know is that the Cain Five, indeed, tastes like nothing else.

Why the 2014 turned into such a beautiful, elegant, seamless, and complete wine, we don't know, either. You'd think we would, because as a team, many of us have been working together for nearly twenty vintages and more. Every year, Ashley, François, our vineyard team, our cellar crew, and I take the same approach to tending the vines, deciding when to pick, and managing the vinifications and the wines in the cellar. Every year, we work with grapes from the exact same vines, and every year, the outcome is slightly different. Maybe we've learned a few things over the years. Definitely, the vines are always a year older, with their roots ever more deeply engaged with the soil. Of course, between each vintage of Cain Five, there's always a family resemblance. But still, each year is different—that's what we mean by the Vintage.

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2014 will be known as the third and last (for us) of the three drought years: 2012, 2013, and 2014. The most shocking of these three years was 2014, when up until the end of January, we had received virtually no rain at all. And then it rained. And rained. In February our reservoirs were filled. In March, it continued to rain. With our soils fully saturated like a sopping wet sponge, the soil warmed up slowly, the vines awoke from dormancy slowly, and thus it would not be an early year.

When all the plants finally came back to life in 2014, it was a glorious spring, almost like a desert bloom after the rain, with wildflowers everywhere. The vines were flush with new growth. Clearly, the soil was alive. (We were happy, too. Relieved is more like it). After that worrisome winter it seemed like everything just flowed.

When we composed the 2014 Cain Five, it seemed to be a rather dense, tight, relatively unexpressive wine. But that was three years ago. Now, the potential of this wine is just beginning to show. The color is relatively dark—not opaque—with no sign of evolution. The aromas are discrete: fruity—floral—herbal—spicy—and pure. On the palate, the wine has a certain density, but now the tannins have melted and this wine just flows. This is a wine for the ages. Drink now or forever.

What's in this wine?

Organically grown grapes from the Cain Vineyard, sulfites, yeast nutrients, malolactic bacteria, egg whites.

How did we make this wine?

The grapes are sorted in the vineyard, hand-picked, allowed to rest, destemmed, sulfites added, gently (partially) crushed into tanks, where, after a few days the fermentation begins spontaneously. After a couple of weeks, based on taste, the wines are drained and pressed and go to barrel to complete fermentation and begin their *élevage*. The Cain Five is blended in the Spring of the first year; *élevage* continues with periodic racking, then fining in the following Winter. The wine was filtered at bottling in August of its second year.

That's it. We try to keep it simple. For very important reasons, we do not inoculate with yeast, but we do try to create a favorable environment for our native yeast.

Christopher Howell, Wine-Grower