



Appellation: Napa Valley

43 lots hand-harvested and vinified separately: 17 lots selected for Cain Five

Harvest Dates	October 7 through November 4, 1998
Total time in Barrel	21 months
Production	4,290 cases of 750 ml bottles
Release Date	January 1, 2002
Suggested Retail	\$80 per bottle

1998 began a series of three late vintages. Each spring, the buds opened late, in mid April, presaging an October harvest. The keys to these vintages were patience, nerves of steel, and uncompromising selection. On the hillsides of our mountain vineyards, we hung on through the cold spells and the first light rains, that just barely wet the dry earth, for the last rays of warm sun to fall on our grapes. I remember greeting our vineyard crew on those cold last days of October and early November in 1998, after having just snatched another precious few tons at seemingly the last possible moment. Standing there with them in the cold and the gathering mist, it was grim. How could we have turned in anything good?

With its slow, even ripening, and extraordinarily long “hang-time,” 1998 brought some marvelous qualities: Deep fruity wines, round, sweet tannins, without the heat of the alcohol, the overripe “jammy” aromas, and the harsh, clumsy tannins that sometimes mark the Napa Valley’s warmer vintages. Not everything, of course, but some of our wines were extraordinary—these form the core of our Cain Five blend for 1998. Essential then, was the process of careful selection and blending that goes into each vintage of Cain Five. As always, we compose the blend following three essential desiderata: Complexity, Balance and Persistence. We feel that in a “difficult” vintage, we have turned in a deep, round, classic beauty of a Cain Five, which will age well for many years to come.

Christopher Howell, Winemaker/General Manager