



2004 Cain Five—Library Release

For the winemaker, revisiting the 2004 Cain Five, 10 years after the vintage, 8 years after bottling, and more than 5 years after its release, is like visiting an old friend. You’ve known each other a long time and each of you has changed. The friendship is renewed and deepened. So these words are as much about us at Cain—the values we embrace, how we understand wine—as they are about the 2004 Cain Five and how it has changed, how we perceive it today, and how our perceptions about wine have changed.

First, to get to the point: this wine is beautiful—it is quietly stunning. Moreover, we so-called “winemakers” didn’t “make” this wine. Quite simply, it has become. The nose is indefinably complex, almost ethereal, of roses, spices, leather, and earth. On the palate, the wine is firm yet satin smooth, and the finish just doesn’t stop.

But the 2004 Cain Five is not for everyone. Those who have loved wine for a long time will immediately recognize this wine—it reminds them of something they’ve been missing, wines of the past that they’ve known and loved. Those who have come to wine more recently and have formed their palates around young, “fruit-forward” wines might not know how to respond. One could be lost, because the style is unfamiliar today—especially in the world of Napa Cabernet.

And certainly there are those, well-trained in identifying a litany of flaws to which a wine might be subject, who will identify the unmistakable signature of the yeast *Brettanomyces*, affectionately called “Brett,” usually thought to be a flaw. If the wine were only about Brett, that would be a problem, especially if it were pure barnyard. But it isn’t—we find much more than any single element to define this wine. To those who simply can’t abide any hint of *Brettanomyces*, We respect your opinion.

How has the 2004 Cain Five changed over time? We can still sense the tar of the wild herbs and the heat of the summer sun on the grapes. But now the wine is not so much fruity as it is floral, and it is not so much sweet as it is savory. And the texture—here is a word we read often these days—if you’re wondering what it means, simply taste this wine. In the world of Cabernet, the Cain Vineyard yields exceedingly fine tannins, but, as with any mountain vineyard, there can be a lot. Like the polished stones in a creek, the past 8 years in the bottle have done much to smooth any rough edges that remained. The wine flows beautifully across your palate—from beginning to middle and end—it is one continuous experience.

Today, in 2014, the 2004 Cain Five is a wine to contemplate and linger over—be prepared to dream.