

Belle Cousine

2004



Proprietors:	Mr. & Mrs. Aubert de Villaine Mr. & Mrs. Laurence W. Hyde Mr. & Mrs. Richard E. Hyde III
Region:	Napa Valley
Appellation:	Los Carneros
Vineyard:	Hyde Vineyard
Age of vines:	Merlot: 6 to 19 years Cabernet Sauvignon: 21 years
Geography:	Eastern edge of the Carneros
Exposure:	South by southeast
Soil:	Shallow loam over clay hardpan
Subterranean:	Ancient terraces and alluvial fans
Acreage:	10.3 acres
Harvest dates:	September 8, 16 & 17, 2004
Bottling date:	April 17 & 18, 2006
Cases produced:	2,175 cases
Suggested retail:	\$60

RED EVOLUTION

Five years of viticultural dedication amidst the HdV Merlot and Cabernet vines at Hyde Vineyard has produced a wine worthy of a new name: "Belle Cousine." The name honors our beautiful cousin who linked the two families of HdV when she departed the shores of California for a life amidst the vineyards of Burgundy.

VINTAGE NOTES

Ten days of unusually warm weather in early March jumpstarted the 2004 growing season to a three week head start. The season then slowed. In late spring, the weather at Hyde Vineyard was cool and unsettled, but rain free. Finally, the quintessential Hyde Vineyard weather appeared, foggy mornings and warm afternoons with gentle winds - enough to concentrate flavors and sugars. The young Merlot selection was harvested just before the temperature soared in early September. The remaining Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon withstood the heat and the result is a concentrated and aromatic wine.

WINEMAKER NOTES

In the glass, this wine opens into an intense mosaic of spice, blackberry, red fruits, and sweet vanilla. Following this aromatic performance, the wine surges forth with a dense core of black cherry and hickory smoke. Peppered with notes of spice, red fruits, and sweet vanilla, soft mineral tannins accompany the black cherry core through the mid-palate and on to a long finish. The 2004 HdV Belle Cousine currently favors decanting an hour before serving. It should continue to improve for another six to twelve years.

- *Stéphane Vivier, Winemaker*

