



Harvest & Varietal Information

VINEYARDS: Rutherford: Morisoli Borges, Beckstoffer—George III, Garvey, Hudson
Carneros: Truchard Atlas Peak: Stagecoach St. Helena: Stanton

VARIETIES: 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot

PRODUCTION: 4,286 cases RELEASE DATE: September 1, 2014

The *2010 Cain Concept—The Benchland* has a long life ahead of it. Only now, in the summer of 2014, is it just coming around. It has a robe of deep, dark purple and the scent of cassis and cocoa. Its firm structure and refined tannins signal a long life. You can savor this wine over a long evening, or over two evenings and you'll just begin to get to know it. Decant it and it will begin to tell its story.

The best way to understand a winery and its vineyards is to see, taste, and experience its wine from a “difficult” vintage. Compared with many winegrowing regions, growing wine in the Napa Valley seems almost too easy. In most years, the fruit not only gets ripe, but our concern is that it doesn't get too ripe. The challenging, or “difficult” years come along only once or twice in a decade. We have learned to enjoy these few challenging years, such as 2010 and 2011, where we have the opportunity to test our reflexes and demonstrate the value of the vineyards with which we have the honor to work. Not only was 2010 a relatively cool year, punctuated by rain in late October, but the yields were also meager. One might expect a thin, unsatisfying wine. To the contrary, our 2010 Cain Concept is wonderful!

A cool year suits us just fine. In the Napa Valley, Cain has long been known to pick earlier than many colleagues—sometimes weeks earlier. Consistent with our predilection for moderate ripeness, by mid-October we found everything we were looking for. Moreover, at 14.6% alcohol, don't think that this wine is a wimp.

It is a time-tested observation that the best vines and vineyard sites, together with the most careful vineyard management, demonstrate their worth in the difficult years. The same is true with the winemaking. Ultimately, the final key lies in the choices made at blending. We must be rigorously honest with ourselves about how each vineyard, and each vinification performed. How does each lot really taste? Which ones, in which proportions, fit together in the blend? In a difficult year, not a great deal of wine will make the cut. For our 2010 Cain Concept, we produced just 4,286 cases.

Our Rutherford Benchland Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards did very well in 2010, both on the east side, near the Silverado Trail in Andy Beckstoffer's George III, and on the west side, in Mike Morisoli's vineyard west of Highway 29. We picked them between October 9 and October 22. These Cabernets provided all the structure we needed, together with a great deal of aromatic complexity. We found just a touch of Merlot and Cabernet Franc from the Truchard Vineyard was necessary to balance the blend. A drop of Petit Verdot completed the picture.

It's a long, methodical, painstaking process; there are many steps, many decisions along the way, but the result is satisfying and well worth the effort!

Christopher Howell, Winemaker/General Manager

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