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WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



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HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
WINE MERCHANTS
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CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780



HYDE DE VILLAIN, CALIFORNIA
EN PRIMEUR



Last year we launched a highly prized new exclusivity, Hyde de Villaine, a beautiful estate located in relatively cool Carneros, in California's Napa Valley. Hyde de Villaine is a project borne of a meeting of two great talents, supported by a gifted and enthusiastic team. We at Corney & Barrow are extremely proud to be part of this exciting venture.

The year 2000, at the dawn of the new millennium, saw the beginning of an inspired historic venture when the de Villaine family from Burgundy and the Hyde family of Carneros, California, decided to work together on a family-run project in Carneros. Thus, with a combined viticultural history spanning some 400 years, Hyde de Villaine came to fruition.

In fact the relationship had existed for some time as Larry Hyde, (Hyde Vineyard's manager) is cousin to Aubert de Villaine's wife Pamela. Aubert is well-known as Director of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti and co-owner of Domaine A & P de Villaine in Bouzeron in Burgundy's Côte Chalonnaise.

This partnership has brought together a unique, exciting combination of very varied skills and experience, transcending continents.

The resulting wines are extraordinary. They combine a degree of the finesse, elegance and refinement, which most of us would associate with European wines, with a balance of richness and vitality afforded by the relatively cool, windy climate of the Carneros region.



Stéphane Vivier and Larry Hyde

THE PEOPLE

In all of our correspondence and third party endorsement, there are three recurring themes which underpin the HdV philosophy, profound respect for the combined families' histories, an intense sense of place and a profound awareness of everyone's responsibility to future generations.

Imagine our delight at hearing that Aubert was involved in a wine region where we were aware there was true potential – where there is a distinctive microclimate, quite different from the rest of Sonoma and Napa, drier, cooler and windier. We were intrigued as to what Aubert would bring to the party in such a different environment from his native Burgundy.

Larry Hyde, Pamela de Villaine's cousin laid the foundations of what would become Hyde Vineyard when he persuaded his father to buy the land in 1979. He had studied at Berkeley and Davis before entering the wine industry in 1970. Over the decades Larry has built up a formidable reputation for quality and many top names beat a path to his door, eager to access Hyde Vineyard fruit.

Despite Aubert's protestations over the years, Larry remained reluctant to make the next step and produce his own wine, preferring to stick to what he knows and where he has proven he has talent. We are delighted that his resolve was gradually worn down and he finally relented, giving 6.9 hectares over to the Hyde de Villaine project.

Aubert de Villaine is one of the most highly regarded and respected men in the wine world. As co-director of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti as well as co-owner of a property in Bouzeron, Domaine A & P de Villaine, Aubert has amassed a wealth of experience. For decades, he has meticulously researched, observed and annotated every nuance of viticultural and vinification practices and followed their impacts on his wines. He brings all of this knowledge to the HdV relationship. Although tradition runs deeply in his veins, Aubert nonetheless is always questioning and experimenting. The gravitas of experience has done little to curb the enquiring mind of youth.

The president of the company is 45 year-old Rick Hyde III – representing the new generation – charged with steering the company into the future, aided and abetted by another cousin, Charles Fairbanks as general manager.

French-born Stéphane Vivier, winemaker, studied both oenology and viticulture at the Université de Bourgogne and, combined with experience as far afield as New Zealand, contributes a depth of experience, allied to a huge respect for *terroir*, echoing that of Aubert.

CARNEROS

Carneros, also known as Los Carneros, is a recognised AVA – American Viticultural Area – the system by which the US designates viticultural regions. As with most regions, Phylloxera had decimated the vineyards here and prohibition had prevented any recovery but gradually, after repeal, some of the noted Napa producers looked to Carneros, recognising the quality of the fruit. By the 1970s there was growing recognition of the typicity of style and in the 1980s planting accelerated, with many of the big Napa players becoming involved. The proximity to San Pablo Bay is the dominant factor in the distinctive microclimate, the fogs and coastal breezes providing a cooler climate. Carneros won AVA status in 1983.

VINEYARD

The HdV wines come exclusively from the Hyde vineyards – and only the best plots at that. It is universally accepted that great wines come from great *terroir* but the skill really comes in respecting that *terroir* and translating it as honestly as possible in the finished wines. Having managed these vineyards for over thirty years, Larry Hyde has an unrivalled knowledge of their character. This is central to the HdV quest for optimal quality.

Winemaker, Stéphane Vivier, has a refined understanding of vineyard management, recognising that the bulk of the work, which he will later finesse, is achieved in the field. Having gained practical experience in Burgundy, Switzerland, New Zealand and Sonoma, Stéphane has a well-rounded body of experience on which to call. He works closely with Larry and Aubert as they push the boundaries, questioning the accepted norms in the region and adapting and implementing the best viticulture and vinification practices that France has to offer. Yields are precisely managed, intensifying the character of the resulting wines.

The HdV team recognise how fortunate they are in Larry's choice of original site. The vineyard is situated on gently rolling hills, facing southeast. The majority, Chardonnay, and Syrah are planted on shallow, loamy soils over ancient alluvial terraces and impenetrable clay. New plantings of Chardonnay are planted at 2,800 vines per hectare, the older ones at 1630 vines per hectare. The vines are varied in age with those vines which graduate to HdV being 25 years and over with De la Guerra vines at between 13 and 15 years. De la Guerra loses out in volume to HdV as the vines age, although some is made up as new plantings come into play. Since we started working together, Aubert's exacting standards have had an impact on production as he gets under the skin of the vineyard, building a clearer understanding of what works where. The result has been a replanting programme, which has drastically reduced production for the coming years, although a large proportion of young Chardonnay has now come of age to boost the HdV Chardonnay totals.

The 1994 plantings of Syrah are at 2445 vines per hectare, those planted in 2000, 2800 vines per hectare. The Merlot and Cabernet vines tend to be planted at the northern end of the vineyard, further away from the bay and the fog it induces. The soils are deeper here too and the southeast slopes, steeper. Merlot is at 1620 vines per hectare and the vines are 21 years old. Cabernet vines are at 1950 vines per hectare and are 24 years old. New plantings are in a north south direction.

The temperate Carneros climate prolongs the growing season, allowing the vines to take advantage of their geological sites, gaining intensity and complexity whilst retaining optimal balance. The rainfall is less than surrounding areas and drainage is helped by ancient creek beds which lie between the topsoil and the relatively impenetrable clay pan. Enough moisture is retained to avoid irrigation, as far as possible.

The vineyards are farmed organically to encourage healthy, living soils, avoiding compaction and encouraging a richly diverse microbial ecosystem. Instead of the more standard approach of using pesticides, specific flowers are seeded which attract the natural predators of harmful pests and so the natural habitats for owls, hawks and wasps are protected as they too provide a natural protection. Similarly, ploughing and natural compost replace herbicides and fertilisers respectively. This is sustainable agriculture taken very seriously borne of the families' keen sense of their responsibilities to past and future generations.



THE WINES ARE EXTRAORDINARY. THEY COMBINE A DEGREE OF THE FINESSE, ELEGANCE AND REFINEMENT, WHICH MOST OF US WOULD ASSOCIATE WITH EUROPEAN WINES, WITH A BALANCE OF RICHNESS AND VITALITY AFFORDED BY THE RELATIVELY COOL, WINDY CLIMATE OF THE CARNEROS REGION.

THE WINES

CELLAR

The HdV cellar was built in 2003 and in accordance with the underlying philosophy, was designed to ensure the gentlest possible handling of the harvest.

Initially sorted in the vineyard, the grapes enjoy a second sorting and then a third, at the winery, on a state of the art sorting table. Within, the building has been designed to maximise the use of gravity avoiding, as far as possible, mechanical pumping. This is all to emphasise the *terroir* which produces the wines, rather than the impact of man.

The juice is taken to a variety of casks, stainless steel, oak vats and oak barrels – marrying individual blocks to the most appropriate vessel. Each barrel or vat's progress is overseen by winemaker Stéphane Vivier until the wine is blended, using only the very best barrels. In tune with the vineyard and cellar, Stéphane can assess the impact of vintage and can be flexible rather than systematic during the *élevage*.

Although he trained elsewhere, Stéphane could well have spent his formative years alongside Aubert, as their philosophies mirror one another. They both favour minimal intervention, a subtlety of touch and judicious use of oak – all to ensure that the personality of the vineyard shines through in the finished wines.



Stéphane Vivier, winemaker

Last year, having built up a sense of excitement in-house, we finally came to taste the wines in, it has to be said, a state of slight trepidation. Would they fulfill their promise? We have seen so many wines where there is a massive disparity between the background story and the finished wines.

We need not have worried. These have Corney & Barrow written all over them – beautiful wines with personality and a clear sense of place.

The hallmark of all four of the Hyde de Villaine's wines is their inimitable minerality and a very obvious freshness – thanks both to natural *terroir* and fastidious vineyard management.

DE LA GUERRA CHARDONNAY

This is produced from the younger vines on the estate although, in Californian terms, they are a very respectable 13 to 15 years of age. The first vintage of de la Guerra was 2005. This wine is aged in 10% new French oak and stainless steel for up to 7 months, the former providing a certain richness, the latter retaining freshness and minerality. Harvesting started early in the morning and after extensive sorting in the vineyard the grapes arrive at the winery no later than 10.30am. Whole cluster pressing lasts up to 5 hours then the must settles in tank for 16 hours before being racked and starting fermentation in stainless steel using natural yeasts before being finished in oak. The name is a tribute to one Don José de la Guerra, patriarch of the Hyde and Fairbanks families, who began making wine in the mid-19th century. The coat of arms of the label is that of the de la Guerra family. Notably, the family won a gold medal for its winemaking at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Fair.

HYDE DE VILLAINES CHARDONNAY

This comes from the older blocks of the Hyde vineyard, vines of 25 years and over. The first vintage was 2000. Harvesting starts in the early morning and after extensive sorting in the vineyard the grapes arrive at the winery no later than 10.30am. Whole cluster pressing lasts up to 5 hours then the must settles in tank for 16 hours before being racked. Fermentation is in stainless steel, using natural yeasts before being finished in oak. This is aged in 25% new French oak for 12 months followed by up to 3 months in stainless steel and 14 months of bottle maturation. The wines feel more European in terms of structure and vitality, combining richness and texture with refined, pronounced mineral definition.

HYDE DE VILLAINES BELLE COUSINE

Named in honour of Pamela de Villaine, Larry Hyde's cousin, this takes advantage of the cooler Carneros climate wherein Merlot thrives, blended with Cabernet Sauvignon. Merlot provides the core, at 88% of the blend. Merlot is picked earlier, generally the last week in September, the Cabernet in mid-October. Everything is hand-harvested, early in the morning and after rigorous selection in the vineyards the grapes arrive at the cellar before 10.30 am. The bunches are sorted on a vibrating sorting table by a team of nine, are 100% de-stemmed and 30% crushed. The fruit is chilled for 3 to 5 days (-12°C) pre-fermentation, to preserve freshness and purity. Fermentation then lasts around 10 days at around 30-31°C, followed by a warm post-fermentation maceration (27°C) which tends to render the tannins more supple. The wines are aged for 4 to 5 months before blending and then aged in 35% new French oak, for 18 months, followed by 18 months in bottle. The result is an immediately accessible, rounded style, richly textured and bearing the hallmark house freshness.

HYDE DE VILLAINES SYRAH

This is a wonderfully harmonious, elegant expression of the Syrah grape, which achieves an enticing complexity in the Carneros conditions. The harvest is early – generally the first week in September – picked by hand and strictly sorted in the vineyard. The fruit arrives at the winery no later than 10.30am, avoiding the heat of the day where they are greeted by a team of nine who oversee further selection on the vibrating sorting table. The Syrah is not crushed but is 100% de-stemmed and undergoes a pre-fermentation cold maceration, to preserve the freshness and purity of the fruit character. Fermentation is in traditional French oak vats, usually lasting around 10 days at up to 33-34°C, followed by a short, warm post-fermentation maceration (27°C) to enhance the floral aromatics. The different lots are aged separately for 4 to 5 months before blending. The wine is aged for up to 15 months in 35% new French oak, followed by 18 months of all – important bottle maturation.

2007 VINTAGE

In contrast with 2006, the winter and spring in 2007 were dry. Low amounts of rain early in the season set the overall theme for the year, dry, cool, long and arid. Spring had been warm, encouraging an early start. This presaged the course of the season which was consistently dry and temperate. There were no heat spikes and September was cool. These conditions made for small bunches of small berries, intensifying the personalities of the individual vineyard sites. The philosophy of dry-farming exercised at the Domaine finessed the vintage, adding concentration and depth, whilst maintaining hallmark balance, elegance and minerality.

Hyde de Villaine Belle Cousine 2007

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18+

The 2007 vintage has a markedly different blend from that of the 2006 vintage, with 60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend, a higher proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon than the previous year. Jet-shot plum in colour, with a firm rim, this is almost opaque. The nose presents a blend of warm fruitcake, tobacco and dark fruit, underpinned by graphite minerals and spice whilst the palate, densely concentrated echoes the aromatics offered by the nose with intense dark fruit supported by a firm backbone. Rounded, generous and expansive, though muscular, this is well-balanced, long and savoury. The tannins are fine – grained, which will stand the wine well in the short and mid-term.

Recommended drinking from 2012 (decanted) to 2024+
£200/case of 6, in bond UK


Hyde de Villaine Californio Syrah 2007

Corney & Barrow Score 18+

Oops – a typo – was our initial reaction to the new label here. In fact, this is a historic tribute to the first settlers in California who were named Californios – and we like history. We also are somewhat enamoured of this Syrah with its surprising finesse and elegance – though the surprise factor is waning somewhat after a year, its being so consistently fine. Intensely coloured, an opaque plum-ruby, this offers a warm, rather toffee-ed nose, dark cherry compote, sweetly-spiced. The palate is layered and complex, luscious fruit layered with pepper and dark chocolate, all punctuated by minerals. Rich, yet elegant, well – balanced, with persistent spice and herb character throughout, this is a lovely wine, energetic, focused and long.

Recommended drinking from 2011 to 2020+
£175/case of 6, in bond UK

TO ORDER, PLEASE USE THE FORM PROVIDED OR CALL 020 7265 2430 (LONDON) OR 01875 321 921 (EDINBURGH)

 These wines are released en primeur. Delivery dates to be confirmed. All prices are quoted in bond UK

2008 VINTAGE

The 2008 growing season was marked by the coldest spring since 1970 and frost was generally a concern. Fortunately the proximity of the Hyde Vineyard to the San Pablo Bay somewhat diminished the impact. The resulting Chardonnay berries were small and concentrated and were further intensified during the cool, dry summer. Late in August there was a brief surge in heat just before harvest of the young vines began on the 1st September.

Hyde de Villaine Chardonnay 2008

Corney & Barrow Score 17+ to 18+

Stone fruit and mineral on the nose, this presents a lovely combination of tropical and citrus fruits, grapefruit freshness to the fore, in advance of more exotic notes. The palate is opulent, sensual and seductive, complemented by a fresh citrus lift and a refined minerality. Rich and long, this is full and impressive. At the time of writing, HdV Chardonnay 2007 is really earning its spurs. The De la Guerra Chardonnay sold out so long ago and customers, who were fans, were coaxed towards this, rather more grown-up wine and goodness it is showing well. Hitherto I had never heard of California/ Napa/ Sonoma references in terms of “value for money,” – quality yes but always with the proviso that the wines are expensive. This HdV Chardonnay breaks that particular mould. We have shown this wine so many times with dramatic results, at blind tastings, tasters placing it at the upper echelons of fine white Burgundy – value indeed. There is a wonderful, unforced classicism here, supreme balance and a refined, well-punctuated minerality which gives focus.

Recommended drinking from 2011 to 2019 plus

£200/case of 6, in bond UK

2009 VINTAGE

Essentially, 2009 marked the third year of drought. The year was extremely dry, until some unexpected rain early in Spring. This meant that bud-break was later than normal which had the positive effect of avoiding risk of frost damage. The weather then defaulted to mild conditions, ideal for a protracted, slow-ripening vintage. A prolonged growing season generally results in enhanced balance and concentration and this 2009 de la Guerra Chardonnay is very fine. The only downside is that quantities are drastically reduced as a large proportion of the vines have graduated to HdV Chardonnay, having come of age.

Hyde de Villaine de la Guerra Chardonnay 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 18

A shimmering, pale, yellow-gold, this is very pretty. Different parcels of vines bring complementary characters to the party, tropical notes from one, excellent natural acidity and freshness from another. The nose is very attractive, with concentrated fruit, adroit citrus and orchard fruit enriched with acacia honey, delicate hints of spice and stony mineral notes. Beautifully textured, the palate has a languid, lemon shortcake character initially but there's a tension on the mid-palate which drives a protracted, focussed finish – lovely wine, beautifully balanced

Recommended drinking from 2011 to 2016+

£145/case of 6, in bond UK

CORNEY & BARROW TASTING GUIDE

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system.

We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

14–16 A very good to excellent wine
16–18 An excellent to outstanding wine
18–20 An outstanding to legendary wine

- Wines are judged within their peer group, eg. Villages, Premier Cru, Grand Cru.
- A definitive score of a young wine is almost impossible. We usually offer a spread (e.g. 14–16) which relates to a potential to achieve a higher mark. A '+' adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.



Vineyards de Hyde de Villaine

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