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INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780

HYDE DE VILLAIN
UK LAUNCH



Hyde de Villaine – UK Launch

We are really delighted to be able to announce Corney & Barrow's appointment as exclusive agents for HdV, Hyde de Villaine, a prize estate located in relatively cool Carneros, in California's Napa Valley. This is a project borne of a meeting of two great talents, supported by a gifted and enthusiastic team. We are extremely proud to be part of this exciting venture.

Hyde de Villaine

The dawn of the new millennium saw the beginning of an inspired 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, of course, co-director of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti and co-owner of Domaine A & P de Villaine in Bouzeron in Burgundy's Côte Chalonnaise.

This is a partnership of skills and cultures from which have resulted some extraordinary wines.

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 People

In all of our correspondence and third party endorsement, there are three recurring themes which unite the HdV philosophy: respect for the combined families' histories, a belief in a sense of place and a profound awareness of responsibility towards future generations.

Larry Hyde 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, such as Ramey, Paul Hobbs, Patz & Hall and Kistler beat a path to his door, eager to access Hyde vineyard fruit. It was from these holdings that 6.9 hectares were ceded, after much negotiation, 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 Domaine A & P de Villaine in Bouzeron, 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 44-year-old Rick Hyde III – representing the new generation – charged with steering the company into the future, supported 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 the *terroir*.

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 decimated the vineyards here and prohibition 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 1980's 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.



Autumnal vines at Hyde de Villaine

The 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 from which to call. He works closely with Larry and Aubert, questioning the conventions in the region and adapting and implementing the best viticultural and vinification practices that France has to offer. Yields are precisely managed, intensifying the character of the resulting wines.

The vineyard is situated on gently rolling hills, facing south-east. The majority, Chardonnay, and the 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 1,630 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 (see below) at between 13 and 15 years. De la Guerra loses out in volume to HdV as the vines age, though some is made up as new plantings come into play.

The 1994 plantings of Syrah are at 2,445 vines per hectare, those planted in 2000, 2,800 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 south-east slopes, steeper. Merlot is at 1,620 vines per hectare and the vines are 21 years old. Cabernet vines are at 1,950 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, using pesticides, specific flowers are seeded which attract the natural predators of harmful pests and 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 Cellar

The HdV cellar was built in 2003 and was designed to ensure the gentlest possible handling of the fruit.

Initially sorted in the vineyard, the grapes enjoy two further sortings at the winery. Within, the building has been designed to maximise the use of gravity, avoiding, as far as possible, mechanical pumping.

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 be flexible rather than systematic during the *élevage*. He favours minimal intervention and judicious use of oak – all to ensure that the personality of the vineyard shines through in the finished wines – a philosophy which draws strength from Aubert's own reputation in this key area.



Cabernet Sauvignon at Hyde de Villaine

The Wines

These are beautiful wines with personality and a clear sense of place, with the hallmark inimitable minerality, a very obvious freshness and a silky, persistent richness.

Alison Buchanan Associate Director, Buying

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. For all of the wines, the routine begins by harvesting started early in the morning and after extensive sorting in the vineyard the grapes arrive at the winery no later than 10.30am. For both the de la Guerra and HdV Chardonnays, 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. Fermentation is then 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 on 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 Villaine Chardonnay

This comes from the older blocks of the Hyde vineyard, vines of 25 years and over. The first vintage was 2000. Picked early in the day, it begins vinification in a similar way to the de la Guerra but the *élevage* is different. HdV Chardonnay 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.

The team at Hyde de Villaine ensure that their wines are allowed to settle in bottles prior to release – the length of time varying with the wines. This is an expensive decision – based, as ever, on quality.

Hyde de Villaine 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. 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 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 Villaine 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 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.

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.*
- *A definitive score of a young wine is almost always impossible. We usually offer a 'spread' (e.g. 14–16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A 'plus' adds further to that potential.*
- *A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.*

