



Press Release

Stephane Derenoncourt Launches Derenoncourt California, First Ever California Wine

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BusinessWire - World-renowned French winemaker and terroir expert Stephane Derenoncourt today announced the inaugural vintage of Derenoncourt California, his first foray into winemaking in California. The new Derenoncourt California wines, sourced from small vineyards, personally chosen by Derenoncourt for their cool microclimates, higher elevations and volcanic soils, represent Derenoncourt's commitment to exploring the potential of California terroir. The 2006 releases include a Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon from Caldwell Vineyard (\$220), a Napa Valley Cabernet Franc from Caldwell Vineyard (\$140), a Napa Valley Merlot from Stagecoach Vineyard (\$140), a Napa Valley Syrah from Hudson Vineyard (\$60) and a Lake County Cabernet Sauvignon from Red Hills Vineyard (\$40).

"I started Derenoncourt California with a mission to produce cool-climate, site-specific Napa wines with an uncompromising approach," said Derenoncourt. "With these wines, I hope to achieve complexity, elegance, power and a true sense of place." Crucial to this project, according to Derenoncourt, is his belief that the more discreet the human influence on a wine, the better. Derenoncourt is an avid proponent of natural viticultural methods and minimal intervention in the cellar, a commitment he developed during years spent farming vineyards in Bordeaux.

Derenoncourt's ability to draw out a full expression of terroir earned him international renown. His wines are not imprinted with any particular "style." Instead, by harvesting the highest quality fruit from the best sites and by using a delicate hand in the cellar, Derenoncourt's objective is to consistently craft distinctive, terroir-driven wines that exhibit freshness, precision and balance while possessing a palate-pleasing sensuality.

Derenoncourt ensured that a trusted colleague, Montesquieu winemaker Helene Mingot, is on the ground full-time in Napa to oversee every detail in the vineyards and the cellar. His site-specific approach to winemaking is evident with the 2006 California wines, for which he used traditional techniques designed to preserve the grapes' inherent freshness and elegance, including slow whole-berry fermentation at cool temperatures and punch-down extraction.

Derenoncourt California wines are produced in partnership with Montesquieu Wines, a California --based importer and winery in the Burgundian negociant tradition that brings artisanal, terroir-focused wines of the highest caliber to wine lovers across the United States. With fewer than 1500 cases produced from five single-vineyard cuvees, quantities of the 2006 vintage are extremely limited. Consumers and trade may request a Derenoncourt California allocation by visiting www.derenoncourtcalifornia.com

2006 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Derenoncourt's flagship wine, the Napa Valley Cabernet reflects both the intensity of Napa terroir and the refinement of Old World winemaking. Derenoncourt selected low-yielding old vines from a small parcel in the Caldwell Vineyard where the cool climate enables a long growing season and its volcanic soils provide intense mineral influence. Produced in miniscule quantities, this true boutique Cabernet flits seamlessly between regal elegance and hedonistic pleasure and promises to be a cellar centerpiece for years to come.

100 cases produced.

2006 Derenoncourt Napa Valley Cabernet Franc

The 2006 Derenoncourt Napa Valley Cabernet Franc represents Stephane's first opportunity to craft a wine entirely from this varietal. Intent on using only the highest quality grapes, Stephane selected one of the oldest parcels in Caldwell Vineyard, because of its expressive Cab Franc clones, cool microclimate, and well-draining rocky clay soils. Structured and powerful on the palate, this singular interpretation of Napa terroir is New World Cabernet Franc at its finest.

225 cases produced.

2006 Napa Valley Merlot Stagecoach Vineyard

In making his first Merlot in California, Stephane sought to produce a wine that expressed Napa's unique terroir but that could match the quality of the Bordeaux Merlots on which he built his reputation. Stephane selected a small, well-ventilated plot of vines in the legendary Stagecoach Vineyard. The Merlot ripens slowly due to its northern exposure and cool climate, building heightened levels of flavor complexity and acidity in the grapes. Volcanic mountain soils imbue the berries with an intensity and mineral presence.

100 cases produced.

2006 Napa Valley Syrah Carneros

The 2006 Derenoncourt Syrah hails from the prestigious Hudson Vineyard in Carneros, Napa's coolest microclimate. Stephane harvested fully-concentrated fruit and then guarded against over-extraction by gently pressing the grapes and slowly fermenting the whole berries at low temperatures. The result is a rich yet elegant wine that showcases Syrah's intense sensuality while reflecting the subtlety of its cool-climate terroir.

600 cases produced.

2006 Lake County Cabernet Sauvignon Red Hills Vineyard

Stephane Derenoncourt selected Red Hills Vineyard for his Lake County Cabernet because its top quality soils and climatic intensity create ideal conditions for growing Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine boasts classic Cabernet tones of ripe crushed blackberries, currants, cedar and earth. Its soft, sweet tannins and balanced acidity give it a curvaceous texture and an enduring freshness on the palate.

575 cases produced.

About Stephane Derenoncourt

Stephane Derenoncourt's career began when he hitchhiked to Bordeaux on a whim and took a job as a vineyard worker in Fronsac. For the next decade, Stephane worked in the vineyards of Bordeaux's Right Bank, becoming intimately familiar with the life of the vine and each plot of land's capacity to stamp its unique qualities on its grapes. When he became the winemaker at Saint-Emilion's venerable Pavie-Macquin in the early '90s, Derenoncourt brought to the cellar what he learned in the vineyards and quickly developed into one of Bordeaux's most respected and sensitive vintners. Today, Stephane consults for over 60 wineries in 10 different countries in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The consistent quality of his work, together with his keen ability to express through his wines the uniqueness of the land from which the grapes come, have earned him a reputation as one of the most sought-after winemakers in the world.

SOURCE: Derenoncourt California

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