

'CŒUR DE VALLÉE'  
A FIRST GROWTH  
TERROIR IN THE HEART  
OF NAPA VALLEY

by Jodie Morlet



MORLET  
*Family Vineyards*

A HEART'S DESIRE

Shortly after receiving his master's degree in œnology, Luc was hired as the winemaker for Château Dauzac, an 1855 Classified Growth in Margaux. Luc perfected his skills crafting Bordeaux wines under the guidance of consultant Jacques Boissenot. When Luc first came to California in 1993, he spent a great deal of time with Jean-Marie

Maurèze, the General Manager for Dominus Estate in Yountville. Proprietor Christian Moueix, whose family owns Château Pétrus in Pomerol, felt that his property's gentle slope and climate were "perfect to make wines of elegance" and that he had a chance to produce a First Growth "Haut-Brion of Yountville." Luc admired the soil profile of the historic Napa-nook vineyard and

also gained an appreciation for Heitz Cellar's Cabernet Sauvignon from Martha's Vineyard in Oakville. One evening, as he was enjoying an early vintage of Dalla Valle's 'Maya,' Luc began dreaming of owning a vineyard and crafting a wine comprised of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc from the *heart of the valley*.

Early in our marriage, land in the world-renowned Oakville appellation was beyond our reach, so we refinanced our



*2017 marked the first vintage from our  
'Cœur de Vallée' vineyard in Oakville*

small home and purchased a property in Knights Valley. Luc was the winemaker at Peter Michael Winery and knew how fantastic our Sonoma *terroir* could be for a red Bordeaux-style wine. He planted the vineyard which became our 'Mon Chevalier' Cabernet Sauvignon label.

In 2006, we started Morlet Family Vineyards by taking

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out a home equity loan to secure long-term vineyard leases for our Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs from the Sonoma Coast, Syrah from the Bennett Valley and a white Bordeaux-style blend from the Dry Creek Valley. In 2007, we added 'Mon Chevalier' to the portfolio, but Luc desired to make Cabernet Sauvignons from the Napa Valley as well.

Earlier that year, we had begun representing the highly

sought-after Tonnellerie Darnajou barrels. Pierre Darnajou was the cooper for the Moueix family's Château Pétrus prior to creating his own cooperage in 1976. Luc became quite familiar with the quality of the Schrader Cellars Cabernet Sauvignons from the Beckstoffer To Kalon vineyard, because the wines were aged almost exclusively in Darnajou barrels. Luc signed a long-term

lease for portions of the vineyard that were planted with Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon.

We named the vineyard designated wine, which is typically 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Cabernet Franc, 'Cœur de Vallée' because if our dream of acquiring a property in Oakville ever came true, we planned to call the vineyard 'Cœur de Vallée' which is French for 'Heart of the Valley.' Our wine, like others

produced from the famous To Kalon vineyard, received great accolades.

#### THE HIGHEST BEAUTY

In 1868, Hamilton W. Crabb purchased 240 acres in Oakville, and four years later, he built a winery and made wine under the name Hermosa Vineyards. By 1878, Crabb was the third-largest producer of wine, just behind Charles Krug and Gottlieb Groezinger. The Napa Valley experienced a viticultural boom in the 1880s. (Our historic winery in St. Helena was built in 1880 from land purchased from Charles Krug.) Crabb's winery and vineyards continued to expand, and in 1886, he changed the name from Hermosa to To-Kalon Wine Company. Greek for 'the highest beauty' or 'the highest good,' Crabb's To-Kalon wines received worldwide recognition.

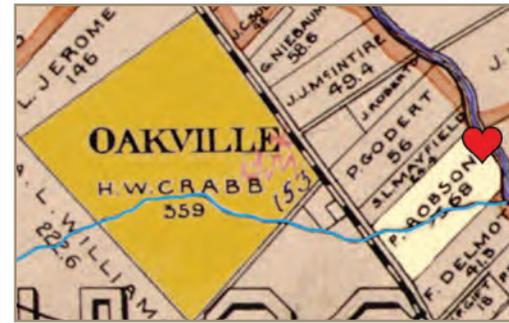
The more recent history of the legal trademark issues over the term 'To Kalon' continue to receive much press, but it is a site's particular *terroir*, not the name, that leads to a winemaker's ability to craft world-class wines.

Geological studies document the reason the soil in this region is perfect for growing premium wine grapes. On the west side of the Oakville AVA, three large alluvial fans begin at the base of Mount St. John and the Mayacamas Range. The gravelly strata "fan" outward in an easterly direction. This marine-derived sediment is comprised of gravels, clay loams and Bale loams and creates a subtle slope down to the Napa River plain. The gentle slope, in conjunction with the well-draining soils, allow excess rainfall to flow into the Napa River from the western side of the Napa Valley.

Oakville receives morning fog from the San Pablo Bay and lingering sun in the afternoon. Just as the heat begins to peak, the cool bay breeze comes through. The resulting mild temperatures at night preserve the color and acidity of the grapes. A distinct combination of alluvial soils, topography and an ideal climate has earned the Oakville appellation the reputation of being a viticultural treasure.



*Hamilton Walker Crabb, circa 1889, and To-Kalon wine labels, 1886 & 1910*



*The To Kalon Creek runs through Crabb's vineyard and what is now our 'Cœur de Vallée' vineyard before reaching the Napa River, map circa 1895*

#### A DREAM COMES TRUE

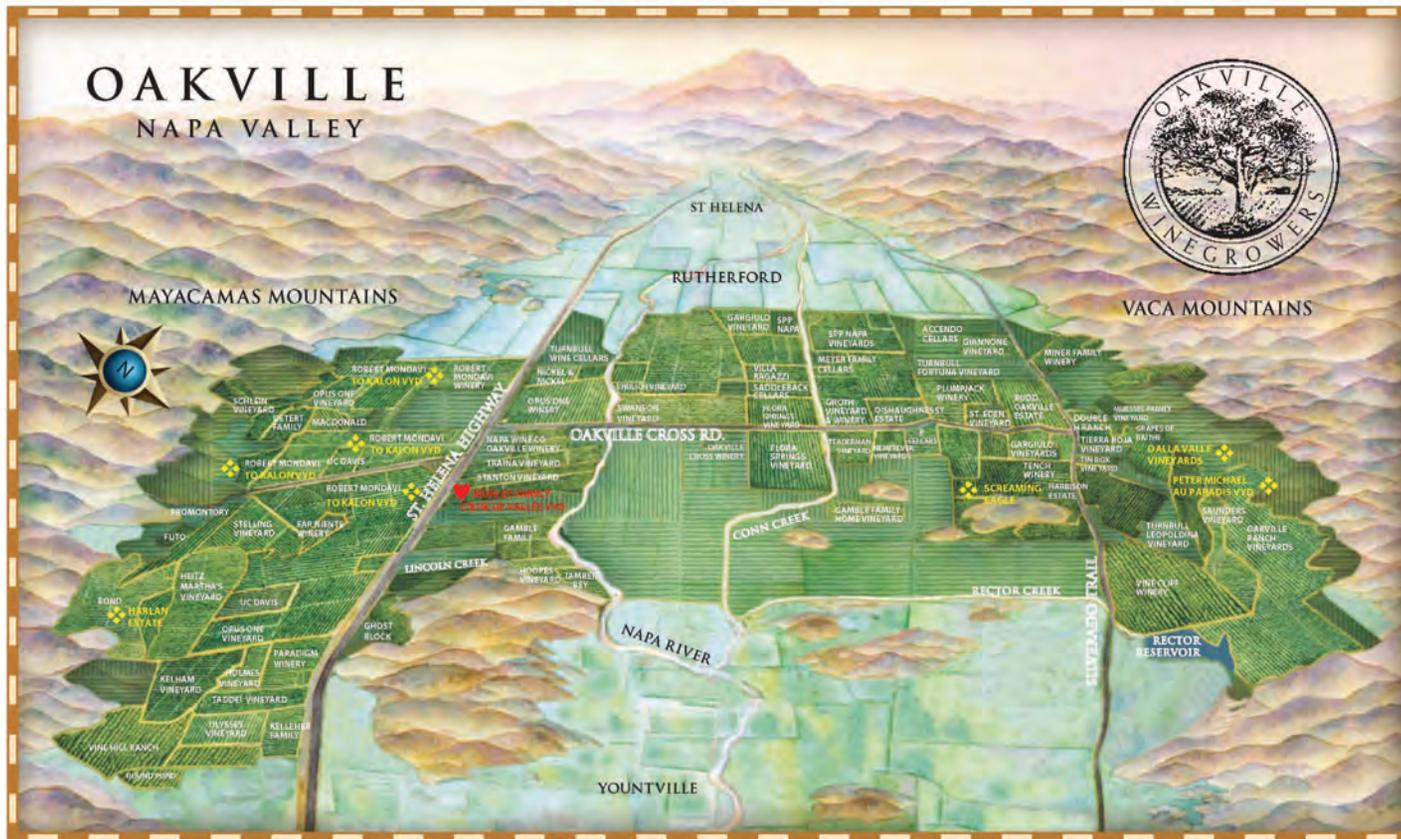
Our dream became a reality, when in 2015, Luc and I purchased one of the last unplanted parcels in the Oakville appellation. The property was originally part of a land grant given to George C. Yount and is located across the highway to the southeast from Crabb's original

To-Kalon vineyard. In 1872, Putnam and Lena Robson purchased the property and planted a vineyard. They built a wine cellar in 1891 and were producing 66 tons of Zinfandel and Riesling annually. Their daughter Jessie married Christopher Chinn, and the property became known as the Chinn Ranch. Jessie remained on the ranch until her death in 1967, and in 1970, the property was sold to William and Candace Hamm of San Francisco, who kept the land fallow and didn't put it back on the market until 2014.

When Luc saw the "For Sale" sign go up in the summer of 2014, he immediately called our real estate agent, our commercial bank representative, and me (in that order!). We had purchased our winery in St. Helena in 2010 and further developed our 'Morlet Estate' vineyard; however, with prices increasing exponentially on the To Kalon lease, it was in our best interest to gain independence from



*Luc and Jodie stand in front of the unplanted property after closing escrow, May 2015*



Left: The east-west axis that includes: Peter Michael's 'Au Paradis,' Dalla Valle, Screaming Eagle, 'Cœur de Vallée,' To Kalon and Harlan Estate within the world-renowned Oakville appellation  
 Right: Geological Soil Profile from the right bank of the To Kalon Creek, with 'Cœur de Vallée' Cabernet Sauvignon vines above

growers and fulfill our long-term vision of becoming 100% estate grown for our Cabernet Sauvignon wines.

So, although it *took a long* (pun intended!) time from when Luc first dreamed of owning a vineyard in Oakville until we closed escrow on the 24-acre property in May 2015, it was definitely worth the wait! Our vineyard lies within the east-west axis that includes Peter Michael Winery's 'Au Paradis' vineyard, Dalla Valle Vineyards, Screaming Eagle, To Kalon and Harlan Estate. As the consulting winemaker for Peter Michael Winery, whose 2012 'Au Paradis' was Wine Spectator's Wine of the Year, Luc felt that our property was located in the "sweet spot" of this prestigious axis.

The To Kalon Creek runs through our land and its alluvial fan resulted in the soil containing 40 to 60% of gravel. This abundance of gravel, along with a continuous

2% slope from west to east, contribute to the well-draining soils. A mapping of the geological soil profile by Envision Geo, LLC confirmed that the large majority of our vineyard is comprised of the same soil profile as the To Kalon vineyard: 103 Bale Series (Loamy topsoil on loamy subsoil) and 104 Bale Series (Loamy topsoil on clay-loamy subsoil). In addition, a small eastern portion of our property consists of 118 Cole Series (Loamy topsoil on silt-loamy subsoil).

Having achieved the greatest success expressing the *terroir* of the Beckstoffer To Kalon vineyard for over a decade with Cabernet Sauvignon FPS Selection 04 and Cabernet Franc FPS Selection 01, Luc planted our 'Cœur de Vallée' vineyard blocks accordingly. Furthermore, he chose the low-vigor rootstocks *Riparia Gloire de Montpellier* and *Riparia x Rupestris 101-14* so that production will always

focus on quality and not quantity. High density planting (2,200 vines per acre) results in competition among the vines, while the rectangular 3 ¼ by 6 foot spacing facilitates proper airflow, thus naturally limiting pest and fungus development.

#### BLOCK A: ALLUVIAL BLOCK

Located the furthest west on the property, this Cabernet Sauvignon section consists of 50 to 60% of gravel, resulting in our smallest clusters and berries which provide elegance, beautiful tannins and a delicate perfume to the finished wine.

#### BLOCK B: BRIDGE BLOCK

With an astonishing 60% of gravel, this section of the



View of the *Alluvial Block* through the entry gate



The *Bridge Block* borders the right bank of the To Kalon Creek



The historic bridge (dated 1872, below) leads to the *Creek Block*

vineyard borders the right (west) bank of the To Kalon Creek. Transitioning to a clay loamy subsoil and shaded by trees in the late afternoon (which lengthens the ripening process), this block is planted with Cabernet Franc. Luc favors adding Cabernet Franc to our 'Cœur de Vallée' because this varietal brings a depth and complexity to the bouquet with elements of toasted coffee beans, espresso and mocha, and also completes the wine's structure with more linear and age-worthy tannins.

#### BLOCK C: CREEK BLOCK

This block is located just past the bridge and borders the left (east) bank of the To Kalon Creek. With 60% of gravel and loamy soil on clay loamy subsoil, it is similar to the Bridge Block, yet benefits from full sun exposure throughout the entire day. This results in Cabernet Sauvignon berries almost as small as those in Block A that add an overall intensity of red fruit and acidic structure to the wine.

#### BLOCK D: DOCTORS' BLOCK

The largest of the six blocks is located at the very center of the property and is the *heart* of 'Cœur de Vallée.' Growing in loamy topsoil and loamy subsoil with 40 to 60% of gravel, the Cabernet Sauvignon vines produce small to medium-sized berries. With full sun exposure all day long, the fruit offers a rich, concentrated and bold character and delivers silky tannins. Subdivided into north and south, we named this entire block as a tribute to all of the members of our Mailing List who are in the health-care field and demonstrate a commitment to patients and their families each day.

#### BLOCK E: EAGLE'S NEST BLOCK

We named this block, which borders The Grove, after the eagle's nest that we found atop the tallest tree. This block begins the Cole Series with loamy topsoil above subsoil comprised mostly of silt-loam. Containing 40 to 50% of gravel, it produces medium-sized Cabernet Sauvignon



berries which have the finest and silkiest tannins and bring the *gras* (oily texture) to the wine.

#### BLOCK F: FORCE BLOCK

With the same soil series as the Eagle's Nest Block, but with 55% of gravel, this section is closest to the Napa River, and the cooler temperatures lead to a longer ripening time.



Luc designed six vineyard blocks to capture the six unique micro-terroirs



*View of the Doctors' Block from The Grove*



*The pine tree towers over the Eagle's Nest Block*



*The Force Block with Mount St. John in the far distance*



*Members of our full-time vineyard team carry out color thinning while meticulously caring for the vines*

The force of the water lends itself well to the name, considering that a portion of our 'Force de la Nature' 100% Cabernet Franc will come from this block.

#### THE GROVE

We chose not to plant vines on one acre, so that 15 valley oak trees, 15 palm trees and the pine tree with the eagle's nest would remain. Although the eagle may *scream* nearby, it nests at 'Cœur de Vallée!' Luc built a platform (in the shape of a heart, *bien sûr!*) in the middle of our bird sanctuary. This area serves as a gathering place for our full-time vineyard staff and is a beautiful place to enjoy the views of the property and surrounding Napa

Valley with our family and friends.

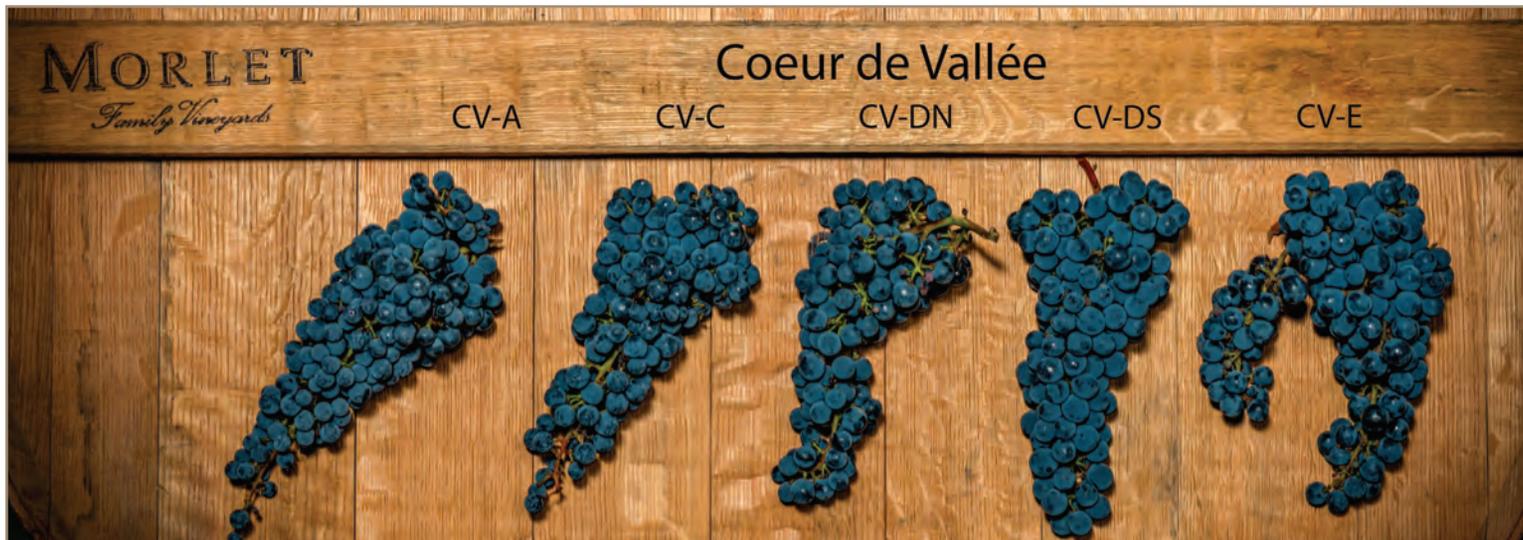
#### FARMING WITH ALL OUR HEART

Luc has always believed that great wines start in the vineyards. Growing up in Champagne, France, he was carried on his mother's back as she tied the vines before he could even walk! In addition to his university degrees in viticulture and winemaking, Luc possesses an intuitive understanding about caring for vines. This, along with a continual pursuit for excellence, has led to the meticulous farming practices in our vineyards.

Naturally, a grape grower is most interested in obtaining the largest revenue. This may result in over-irrigation

to plump up the berries or an unwillingness to allow for much crop thinning. For this reason, Luc began our label in 2006 with long-term per-acre leases, rather than purchasing grapes by the ton. This ensured the quality which he desired, even though we did not own the land.

Having our own estate vineyards allows Luc the complete authority in making long-term decisions to grow the best fruit possible. He is able to implement organic and sustainable farming methods with a strong sense of stewardship for the land. Luc person-



*Each block of Cabernet Sauvignon contributes to the overall complexity of 'Cœur de Vallée'*



*Tasting our 2018 vintage with the Maîtres de Chai for Châteaux Mouton Rothschild and Clerc Milon, St. Helena, June 25, 2019*

ally selected and trained each member of our full-time vineyard staff. Our dedicated team consists of ten hard-working and detail-oriented gentlemen, who, under Luc's daily supervision, carefully and diligently tend to our vines.

#### OUR ELEGANT FIRST GROWTH

Our 'Cœur de Vallée' has achieved wonderful recognition over the years. Robert M. Parker, Jr. described this wine as an "opulent, fleshy, full-bodied red" that has "outstanding texture, purity and length." He declared that our 2011 was a candidate for "wine of the vintage" and that our 2012 was one of that vintage's "superstars!" We were honored that our 2013 vintage was selected by Hi-Time

Wine Cellars as their Wine of the Year and was a featured wine at Spago Beverly Hills last year. Jeb Dunnuck proclaimed that our 2015 was "classic Napa Valley all the way." He described our 2016 as "a thrill a minute... as seamless and elegant as they come, yet so opulent and sexy... a remarkable Cabernet Sauvignon."

Deep garnet-purple in color, 'Cœur de Vallée' is typically characterized by its striking bouquet of lavender and violets over a core of sweet red berries, crème de cassis, Chambord liqueur, blackcurrants and licorice, and compelling notes of mocha, espresso, chocolate and forest floor. Medium to full-bodied with an impressive fine-grained texture, this powerful yet refined Cabernet Sauvignon

is expressive from start to finish, boasting a background freshness that supports the intense black fruit layers. The wine displays an extraordinary concentration, richness, finesse and purity while possessing silky and polished tannins leading to an elegant lift on the long, lush finish. The stunning 'Cœur de Vallée' ages gracefully for decades.

Luc recently hosted Gérard Linares, the Maître de Chai (Cellar Master) for Château Mouton Rothschild, a Classified First Growth in Pauillac, as well as Frédéric Faure, the Maître de Chai for Château Clerc Milon, also a Classified Bordeaux Growth in the heart of the Médoc region. The 2018 'Cœur de Vallée' was included in the blind tasting at our winery. After evaluating the concentration and depth of the wine, our guests reached a consensus that the vineyard must be 31 years old. Imagine their shock when Luc explained that the 2018 vintage only marked our vineyard's fourth leaf!



*Luc spends time with Christian and Cherise Moueix in Saint-Émilion, June 7, 2019*



*A view of the Mayacamas Range with Mount St. John at sunset just after planting 'Cœur de Vallée,' August 2015*

Last summer, Luc traveled to Bordeaux with fellow vintners from the Oakville Winegrowers Association. While there, he enjoyed technical tastings to evaluate soil profile and *terroir* at Château Latour and Château Lafite Rothschild, both Classified First Growths. Two and a half decades after first meeting at the Napanook vineyard, he had the opportunity to reconnect with Christian Moueix while visiting Château La Fleur-Pétrus! Luc was reminded of Christian's desire to craft an elegant wine from the Napa Valley.

Robert Parker declared that Luc "is not only a fabulous winemaking talent, he knows how to bring the French *savoir faire* of complexity, elegance and precision to the ripe, concentrated, intense fruit of California." We invite you to experience our elegant First Growth from the heart of the Napa Valley and enjoy 'Cœur de Vallée' with your loved ones. *A Votre Santé!*

## THE VINTAGE AND HARVEST OF 2017

*by Luc Morlet*

A true *Vin de garde* vintage is how 2017 will be remembered at Morlet Family Vineyards. Following an extremely wet winter, the growing season started slowly with a later-than-usual bud break. This led to a two-week late flowering, yet with perfect conditions. From that moment, it was clear that vine vigor would need to be managed properly. The rigorous and timely thinning of the crop was paramount in readjusting the overall timing of the cycle of the vines in order to achieve full physiological ripeness before the rainy season. Fortunately, this also allowed us to be finished with harvest before the wildfires broke out. Thus, all of our 2017 wines are smoke-free.

The dry, sunny and hot ripening season was also



## A KINDNESS OF HEART

*When we approached our bankers regarding a loan for the Oakville property, they preferred that the financial institution not carry the entire purchase price along with the vineyard development costs, and requested that a small portion be secured from another source. The husband and wife team of Richard Johnson, DVM and Nancy Hampel, DVM, DACVS had long been collectors of our wines. Amazingly, shortly after our conversation with the bank, Rich reached out to us and mentioned that if we were ever in need of a personal loan, he and Nancy would be happy to assist us!*

*Now, years later, the vineyard is fully producing and the promissory note is paid, but we will always be grateful that they were willing to help us realize our dream. Beginning with the release of our 2017 vintage, we are dedicating our 'Cœur de Vallée' Cabernet Sauvignon label to Drs. Johnson and Hampel, who, throughout their careers, have demonstrated a kindness of heart toward the animals for whom they care, and who have forever touched our hearts by their incredible trust and support.*

characterized by a very long heat wave over Labor Day weekend. This resulted in concentrated fruit packed with straight-forward tannins and a lively acidic structure. Attentive sorting, gentleness of extraction and careful tasting and monitoring of the vats were crucial for expressing the wonderful qualities of the vintage. Our 2017 Cabernet Sauvignons display a strong and intense character, with complex and fragrant bouquets of lavender, dark fruit, pencil shavings, crème de cassis and savory notes. With vibrant density, the palate offers a refreshing, elegant, fine-grained and rich texture leading to a long, mineral-laced finish. Boasting remarkable decades-long aging capability, these wines will reward patient cellaring. *Santé!*

## Spring 2020 Release



2017

### 'CŒUR DE VALLÉE'

OAKVILLE, NAPA VALLEY  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Located in the world-renowned Oakville appellation, in the heart of the Napa Valley, our vineyard lies within an alluvial fan and borders the banks of the To Kalon Creek. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc vines benefit from gravelly and loamy Bale soil in this warm yet temperate climate. Handcrafted using classical winemaking techniques, this wine is dedicated to Drs. Richard Johnson and Nancy Hampel who have always demonstrated their kindness of heart. It is 'Heart of the Valley' or 'Cœur de Vallée.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 94+ points:** *This is a blend of 96% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Cabernet Franc. Approximately two-thirds of the fruit for this vintage came from Beckstoffer's To Kalon vineyard, with the other third coming from Morlet's new 'Cœur de Vallée' vineyard in Oakville—just across the road from To Kalon. Very deep purple-black colored, the 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon 'Cœur de Vallée' prances out of the glass with a pretty perfume of lavender, chocolate-covered cherries and garrigue over a core of blackcurrant cordial, plum preserves and unsmoked cigars with a waft of dried mint. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has an impressive fine-grained texture with background freshness supporting the intense black fruit layers, finishing long and earthy.* – December 2019



2017

### 'PASSIONNÉMENT'

OAKVILLE, NAPA VALLEY  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Crafted with the passionate, uncompromised and ongoing pursuit of quality, this judicious blend comes from the finest barrels of our manicured vineyards in the Oakville appellation and on the foothills of Knights Valley and St. Helena. As the French say, "Je t'aime, un peu, beaucoup, passionnément!" (I love you, a little, a lot, passionately!) This special wine is dedicated to my wife, Jodie Morlet. It is 'Passionately' or 'Passionément.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 96 points:** *Composed of 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, 85% of the fruit in this barrel selection wine comes from Beckstoffer's To Kalon and Missouri Hopper vineyards, while 10% is from the 'Morlet Estate' vineyard in St. Helena, and 5% comes from the 'Mon Chevalier' vineyard in Knights Valley. Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon 'Passionément' gives up wonderfully fragrant notes of wilted roses, candied violets and black cherry compote with a core of crème de cassis, star anise, pencil shavings and unsmoked cigars plus a touch of bouquet garni. Medium to full-bodied, the palate offers impressive energy with a firm, grainy texture and plenty of freshness, finishing long with lots of earthy/mineral layers. Should age beautifully!* – December 2019

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2018

### 'LA PROPORTION DORÉE'

SONOMA COUNTY  
PROPRIETARY  
WHITE BORDEAUX-  
STYLE BLEND

(stirring) contribute to this true *vin de garde*. As in architectural arts, it is 'The Golden Ratio' or 'La Proportion Dorée.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 97-100 points:** *Luc Morlet has 100 Muscadelle vines, planted in 1953, which he co-ferments with the Sauvignon Blanc to produce this stunning wine. This barrel sample of 2018 'La Proportion Dorée' is composed of 67% Sémillon, 32% Sauvignon Blanc and 1% Muscadelle. It delivers the most beautiful perfume of freshly crushed, ripe nectarines, honeydew melon, green guava and fresh pears with hints of juniper, coriander seed, beeswax and lime blossoms with a waft of crushed stones. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has amazing freshness and a beautifully satiny texture supporting layer upon layer of citrus and stone fruit flavors, finishing with fantastic length and depth.* – December 2019



2018

### 'MA DOUCE'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW  
CHARDONNAY

Located on the Sonoma Coast, on the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean, this hillside vineyard is comprised of Goldridge soil and benefits from both the cool maritime breeze (*douce brise*) and the mild and sunny mountain climate. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine is dedicated to my wife, Jodie Morlet. It is 'My Sweet' or 'Ma Douce.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 96-98 points:** *'Ma Douce' comes from a vineyard in Fort Ross-Seaview—not far from Marcassin Vineyard. It is planted mainly to Old Wente clone selection. A barrel sample to be bottled in February 2020, the 2018 Chardonnay 'Ma Douce' has a provocative savoriness on the nose with loads of nutty/yeasty notions over the core of lemon curd, key lime pie and candle wax plus wafts of honeysuckle and marzipan. Medium-bodied, the palate has loads of zip and zing, with the intense yet elegantly expressed citrus fruit offset by a lively line of acidity, finishing long and mineral laced.* – December 2019



2018

### 'MA PRINCESSE'

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
CHARDONNAY

Located on the river bench of Sonoma County's Russian River, this vineyard benefits from Goldridge soil containing metamorphic rock. The cuttings come from the Old Wente field selection, renowned for excellent quality and minerality. Its concentration originates from the typically petite size of the berries. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine is dedicated to our daughter, Claire Morlet. It is 'My Princess' or 'Ma Princesse.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 97-99 points:** *'Ma Princesse' comes from the Ritchie vineyard in Russian River, planted to Old Wente clone selection, from vines that are 50+ years old. A barrel sample to be bottled in Febru-*

ary 2020, the 2018 Chardonnay 'Ma Princesse' comes sashaying out of the glass with flamboyant notes of peach cobbler, lemon tart and candied orange peel plus touches of fresh pineapple, spice cake, brioche and white blossoms. Medium to full-bodied, the palate is completely coated with stone fruit and spicy flavors, featuring a racy backbone and silken texture, finishing very long. – December 2019



2018

### 'CÔTEAUX NOBLES'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW  
PINOT NOIR

Located on the Sonoma Coast, on the eastern slope (Côte) of the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean, this hillside vineyard (Côteau) benefits from the cool maritime breeze and the mild and sunny mountain climate. The noble site's natural conditions are ideal for growing excellent Pinot Noir in the Goldridge soil. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this wine is a tribute to the Nobles family that has been farming this land for four generations. It is the 'Noble Hillside' or 'Côteaux Nobles.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 95-97 points:** *The 'Côteaux Nobles' Pinot Noir comes from 27-year-old vines planted at the Nobles Ranch vineyard in Fort Ross-Seaview AVA. A barrel sample, the 2018 Pinot Noir 'Côteaux Nobles' displays a medium ruby-purple color. It rocks up with beautiful black cherries, boysenberries and kirsch scents followed by wafts of allspice, cloves, wilted roses, Ceylon tea and freshly tilled loam. Medium to full-bodied, the palate offers wonderfully intense, perfumed black berry flavors with a plush texture and bags of freshness, finishing on a lingering spicy note.* – December 2019



2018

### 'EN FAMILLE'

FORT ROSS - SEAVIEW  
PINOT NOIR

For generations, our family has been growing the Pinot Noir grape in France. Each harvest, we celebrate this time-honored commitment while our children stomp a small vat of Pinot Noir from California's Sonoma Coast. Handcrafted using classical Burgundian winemaking techniques, this special wine is dedicated to our grandparents, parents and relatives from both countries. As with any family celebration or casual gathering, this wine is to be appreciated 'En Famille.'

**Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 95-97+ points:** *The 'En Famille' Pinot Noir comes from a vineyard planted in 1990, right next door to the 'Côteaux Nobles' vineyard in Fort Ross-Seaview. A barrel sample, the 2018 Pinot Noir 'En Famille' sports a medium ruby-purple color, opening with a drop-dead gorgeous fragrance of violets, rose hip tea, fresh raspberries and cinnamon toast over a core of cherry pie and pomegranate plus wafts of garrigue and rhubarb. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has the most seductively silken texture framing the intense red berry and earthy flavors, finishing very long and refreshing.* – December 2019

DESIGN: Leanne Schy PHOTOS: Tim Carl Photography  
MAPS: Oakville Winegrowers (2019) *American Viticultural Area Artist's Rendering - Not to Scale (highlights added)*; Buckman, O.H. & Punnett Brothers (1895) *Official Map of the County of Napa, California: compiled from the official records and latest surveys*; San Francisco: Punnett Bros. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004629041/highlights-added/>.  
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Robert Parker's Wine Advocate Feb. 2010, Oct. 2013, Oct. 2014, Dec. 2014; JebDunnuck.com June 2018, June 2019; Napa County Historical Society; GrailSomma: *The True Story of To-Kalon Vineyard* Sept. 7, 2015; San Francisco Chronicle Moutex Files; France's 'Mr. Morlet' makes good on a promise to produce a top New World wine in Yountville Feb. 3, 2005; Oakville Winegrowers; Bosset Collection, 1881 Napa; UC Davis Dept. Viticulture & Enol-ogy, Oakville Station; Envison Geo. LLC.

# MORLET

Family Vineyards



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## 'CŒUR DE VALLÉE' OVER THE YEARS

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VINTAGE	TASTING NOTES	CELLAR NOTES JAN. 2020
2007	<p>“The 2007 ‘Cœur de Vallée’ (from Oakville) is a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Cabernet Franc. Projected aromatics of cedarwood, black currants, ink, espresso roast, spice box, and chocolate are followed by an opulent, fleshy, full-bodied red that is slightly more evolved and accessible than the ‘Passionnement.’ It should evolve for 20–25 years... This is a brilliant portfolio of wines from Frenchman Luc Morlet.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Feb. 2010 RP</i></p>	Superbly complex now. Decant 3 hours prior to serving. Otherwise, cellar for 2 to 3 years.
2008	<p>“The inky/purple-tinged 2008 ‘Cœur de Vallée’ is a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Cabernet Franc. It offers up complex notes of unsmoked high class cigar tobacco, crème de cassis, subtle barbecue smoke, licorice and pen ink. Full-bodied with outstanding texture, purity and length, this awesome Cabernet Sauvignon can be enjoyed over the next 25–30 years... One of northern California’s most talented wine producers is Frenchman Luc Morlet... His extraordinary Cabernet Sauvignon portfolio include two offerings from Oakville (which emerge from the Beckstoffer-To Kalon Vineyard) and one from Knight’s Valley. The stunning 2008s are as good if not better than the Morlet 2007s. The 2009s appear to be among the most promising wines of the vintage which will be much more irregular than the 2007s or even the 2008s in Napa.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2010 RP</i></p>	Great <i>vin de garde!</i> Decant 24 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 5 or more years.
2009	<p>“The 2009 ‘Cœur de Vallée’ is wonderfully open, silky and expressive from start to finish. Freshly cut flowers, red berries, mint and sweet spices all make an appearance in this polished, hugely refined Cabernet. Hints of tobacco and cedar add to the overall impression of pure refinement. In 2009, the ‘Cœur de Vallée’ includes 24% Cabernet Franc, which gives the wine much of its sensual inner perfume and sweetness. Anticipated maturity: 2017–2029.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2011 AG</i></p> <p>“The 2009 ‘Cœur de Vallée’ is sourced from the venerable Beckstoffer-To Kalon Vineyard. The purity and intensity of the richly sculpted black fruit is breathtaking, the fruit saturates everything it touches and shows off ripe, black cherry and espresso notes on the finish.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Oct. 2011 DW</i></p>	Wonderfully complex and intense. Decant 1 hour prior to serving, or cellar for 4 to 5 years.
2010	<p>“The 2010 ‘Cœur de Vallée’ is laced with freshly cut flowers, sweet red berries and mint. Weightless and crystalline, the 2010 is pure silk and finesse. The ‘Cœur de Vallée’ is always the most elegant of Morlet’s Cabernets, and the 2010 plays true to type. Sweet oral notes add lift on the finish. The 2010 is gorgeous today, but it needs a few years in bottle to blossom fully. This is yet another tremendous wine from Luc and Jodie Morlet. The 2010 is 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Cabernet Franc. Anticipated maturity: 2020–2030... Luc and Jodie Morlet’s 2010s are off the charts. The 2010s have huge structure, but the fruit is so ripe and voluptuous in these wines that the perception of tannin is often imperceptible.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Dec. 2012 AG</i></p>	Incredible <i>vin de garde!</i> Decant 24 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 5 or 7 more years.
2011	<p>“Even better is the 2011 ‘Cœur de Vallée,’ a blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Cabernet Franc, all from the Beckstoffer-To Kalon Vineyard. This sexy 2011 is a candidate for the wine of the vintage. Its deep ruby/purple color is followed by notes of forest floor, violets, bouquet garni, black currant and blueberry fruit, stunning richness and no herbaceousness or astringency, and a long, lush finish. A terrific effort in this challenging vintage, it can be enjoyed over the next 10–12 years... Luc Morlet, who has his own family estate and also works as a consultant [at Peter Michael Winery]... is one of the hot commodities in northern California, producing world class wines. From fruit purchased from some of the best Napa Valley vineyards, Morlet Family Vineyards is making some of the most exciting wines of the region.” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Oct. 2013 RP</i></p> <p>“2011 ‘Cœur de Vallée’ is a monumental wine by any standard with a wafting perfume of wild berry, salted cherry taffy and tobacco. The palate is bold yet complex with gorgeous depth and saturation to the sweet cherry, berry and tobacco. Beautiful, classic Oakville, it is hard to walk away from this.” <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Oct. 2013 DW</i></p>	Intense and very complex. Decant 1 hour prior to serving, or cellar for another 3 to 4 years.
2012	<p>“Luc Morlet’s 2012 ‘Cœur de Vallée’ is a blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Cabernet Franc from the Beckstoffer-To Kalon Vineyard. A mind-blowing effort, it offers up notes of mocha, forest floor, blueberries, blackcurrants, asphalt and licorice. Full-bodied and opulent, this sensational 2012 is one of the vintage’s superstars. It should drink well for 20 years... The 2012s appear to be spectacular efforts. Kudos to Morlet Family Vineyards!” <i>Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Oct. 2014 RP</i></p>	Wonderful intensity and texture. Decant 1 hour prior to serving, or cellar for 5 or more years.

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VINTAGE	TASTING NOTES	CELLAR NOTES JAN. 2020
2013	<p>"From the Beckstoffer To Kalon-Vineyard, the 2013 'Cœur de Vallée' shows creamy tannins, beautiful blackberry and cassis fruit, and hints of blueberries, violets, forest floor and licorice. This is a blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Cabernet Franc, and the black fruits are triumphant in this gorgeous wine. It should drink nicely for 25-30 years." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Dec. 2015 RP</i></p> <p>"A nose of cocoa powder, raspberry, licorice and cassis with a briary undercurrent. The palate shows a broad entry with subtle powdery blue fruit vitality, mint, with traces of currant and sweet, sticky plum." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Dec. 2015 DW</i></p>	Great <i>vin de garde!</i> Best to cellar for another 4 years.
2014	<p>"Only 100 cases were produced of the 2014 'Cœur de Vallée' which comes from Oakville. The wine is incredibly complex with a dense purple color, a striking bouquet of violets, forest floor, licorice, fruitcake, blackberry and blackcurrants. It is powerful and rich with supple tannins and extraordinary concentration and purity. This is a magnificent wine to drink over the next 25 or more years." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Oct. 2016 RP</i></p> <p>"The 2014 'Cœur de Vallée' (76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Cabernet Franc) boasts an incredibly sexy, full-bodied, thrillingly textured profile as well as to-die-for notes of blueberries, black cherries, dried herbs, and flowers. This powerful, blockbuster-styled beauty checks in near the top of the vintage, and while already drinking beautifully, it will keep for 15-20 years." <i>JebDunnuck.com, June 2018 JD</i></p> <p>"The nose is all measured precision of carbon, herb, camphor, coffee and chocolate. I commented to Luc that I could just smell it all afternoon I was so captivated. The palate entry is the most vibrant and structured of all the wines showing a bright herb, coffee and firm red cherry fruit with solid acidity throughout. Drink 2019 - 2032." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Mar. 2017 DW</i></p>	Intense, complex and creamy. Decant 2 to 3 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 4 to 5 more years.
2015	<p>"The 2015 'Cœur de Vallée' has a deep garnet-purple color and slightly reticent nose at this youthful stage, revealing hints of crushed blackberries and blueberries with touches of loam, underbrush, garrigue, mocha and licorice. Medium to full-bodied, firm, concentrated and with great tension, it has lovely ripe, grainy tannins and plenty of earthy/meaty personality, which comes through on the palate and the long finish." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Oct. 2017 LPB</i></p> <p>"The 2015 'Cœur de Vallée' (95% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc) comes from the Beckstoffer-To Kalon Vineyard and offers a dense yet also plush, blockbuster style in its huge black, blue, and purple fruits, violets, chocolate, and mineral-like aromas and flavors. As with the 2014, this cuvée is one of the more opulent, sexy wines in the lineup and is classic Napa Valley all the way." <i>JebDunnuck.com, June 2018 JD</i></p> <p>"The nose is a broader black fruit with notes of savory and spice and supple notes of caramel and mocha. The palate is more structured with concentrated and polished fresh blackberry, plum and notes of walnut." Drink 2019-2035." <i>Purely Domestic Wine Report, Apr. 2018 DW</i></p>	Great <i>vin de garde!</i> Decant 24 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 5 to 7 more years.
2016	<p>"This is the last vintage when this wine will come exclusively from Beckstoffer's To Kalon vineyard. In the future it will come (more and more) from Morlet's own new vineyard in Oakville—just across from To Kalon. A blend of 87% Cabernet Sauvignon and 13% Cabernet Franc, the 2016 'Cœur de Vallée' has a very deep purple-black color and reveals compelling notes of minted blackcurrants, black cherries and wild blueberries with touches of sage, cigar box, tilled black soil and Indian spices with a suggestion of cardamom. Full-bodied and laden with densely packed, muscular fruit, it has a rock-solid frame of ripe, grainy tannins and seamless freshness, finishing very long with those To Kalon spices lingering with fantastic persistence." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Oct. 2018 LPB</i></p> <p>"The 2016 'Cœur de Vallée' is a thrill a minute, offering awesome notes of blue fruits, chocolate, incense, candied violets, and high-class cigar tobacco. As seamless and elegant as they come, yet also opulent and sexy, this [is a] remarkable Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink it over the coming 2-3 decades." <i>JebDunnuck.com, June 2019 JD</i></p>	Intense and complex. Decant 3 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 4 or 5 more years.
2017	<p>"This is a blend of 96% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Cabernet Franc. Approximately two-thirds of the fruit for this vintage came from Beckstoffer's To Kalon vineyard, with the other third coming from Morlet's new 'Cœur de Vallée' vineyard in Oakville—just across the road from To Kalon. Very deep purple-black colored, the 2017 'Cœur de Vallée' prances out of the glass with a pretty perfume of lavender, chocolate-covered cherries and garrigue over a core of blackcurrant cordial, plum preserves and unsmoked cigars with a waft of dried mint. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has an impressive fine-grained texture with background freshness supporting the intense black fruit layers, finishing long and earthy." <i>Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, Dec. 2019 LPB</i></p>	Intense, deep and complex <i>vin de garde!</i> Decant for 24 hours prior to serving. Best to cellar for 7 years.