

Morlet Becomes Latest Napa Vineyard to Release on La Place de Bordeaux

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The Morlet family's top cuvée, 'Cœur de Vallée' is the latest wine from Napa Valley to be released on La Place de Bordeaux in September's increasingly crowded 'hors Bordeaux' series, the drinks business can reveal.



Luc & Jodie Morlet's 'Cœur de Vallée' Vineyard, Oakville, Napa Valley

Coming from Oakville, in the very heart of Napa, Morlet's Cœur de Vallée joins a host of the leading wines from Napa already released on La Place. These include Opus One, Promontory (from Harlan Estate), Insignia (from Joseph Phelps), Maya (from Dalla Valle Vineyards), Pym-Rae (from the Tesseron Family) and Rubicon (from Inglenook). It also joins Favia Wines' two leading cuvées, Coombsville and Cerro Sur, whose release on la place we revealed earlier this month.

Timothée Moreau of Bureau des Grands Vins is the courtier for the Morlet release, with the 10,000 bottles in the first release being allocated to a pool of twelve négociants. The release is from the excellent 2019 vintage which I was lucky enough to taste in Bordeaux earlier this month (see tasting note below).

As the name of the wine perhaps suggests – and like many former Napa releases on La Place – there is a French connection here, but it is more with Champagne than Bordeaux.

Born in Épernay to a fifth-generation winegrower family, Luc Morlet grew up on his family's Champagne domaine. He is a trained Œnologist with an MBA in wine commerce and has interned at l'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique in Bordeaux as well as at Maison Chanson Père et Fils in Beaune. He was appointed by the Lurton family as régisseur of Château Dauzac in 1994, working under legendary wine consultant Jacques Boissenot.

Luc relocated to the Napa Valley to join his wife Jodie, who holds a Master's Degree in Education from UCLA, in her native California. After five harvests crafting wines at Newton Vineyard alongside international wine consultant Michel Rolland, Luc was hired in 2001 as the winemaker for Peter Michael Winery. In 2006, as Luc transitioned to a consulting role (which he maintains to this day), he and Jodie founded Morlet Family Vineyards.

Cœur de Vallée is Morlet's inaugural release on la place, but their press release hints as more to come. Commenting on the release, Jodie Morlet noted, "For nearly two decades, our winery has been developing an international market. Luc and I are very grateful to now have the opportunity to share our story and passion with wine connoisseurs around the globe."

Tasting note

Morlet Cœur de Vallée 2019 (Oakville, Napa Valley, 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc, 15.3% alcohol).

Gloriously indulgent and screaming ‘Napa’, this is immediately open and expressive on the nose, with lovely floral notes – violets, dried rose petals and patchouli alongside the dark berry fruit – blueberries, mulberries, brambles, black cherries, and just a grating of ultra-dark chocolate. But there’s something French about this too, with plenty of the freshness one often associates with French-influenced Napa wines and a cool, calm, measured concentration. Texturally very fine, with a compact and dense core. There is a nice vibrant sense of lift too. Interestingly, there is almost a hint of Château Lascombes on the nose – that prominent but well-integrated oak accentuating the inherent florality of the terroir (perhaps the influence of Michel Rolland). Great density and very fine-grained silky tannins give this a structured, architectural almost sculptural form. Spectacular, very elegant and refined. **98.**