

PLATINUM SERIES

Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

Of all the spectacular success stories to be found in the California wine business, none is more compelling or worthwhile than that of Corté Riva Vineyards located in Napa Valley's picturesque town of St. Helena.

Corté Riva is the culmination of a long time dream of Nieves and Lawrence Cortez and Nieves' cousin Romel Rivera. All are originally from Luzon in the Northern Province of the Philippine Islands. They came to the United States in the late 1970s and found work in the vineyards around Calistoga in northern Napa County.

At one point, Nieves and Lawrence were married. Through hard work and great sacrifice, both Lawrence and Romel gradually climbed their way through the layers of opportunity and became members of the distinguished Pride Mountain Vineyards of St. Helena. Romel Rivera became winemaker and Lawrence Cortez served as cellar master.

In 1996, Nieves Cortez began the task of convincing her husband and cousin that they should attempt to produce wines under their own label. "Our next door neighbor in Calistoga, Placido Garcia (now mayor of Calistoga), had some second growth grapes that he allowed Lawrence to use," recalled Nieves. "We only made small amounts of wine for family and friends. Everyone loved the wines and it was then that I started dreaming of making our own wines under our own label."

For a time, Lawrence and Romel fought off the notion of trying to compete with the 3,000-plus wineries that populate the California wine industry. But Nieves Cortez was unrelenting and the pair finally gave in bolstered by the high marks and general acceptance of Pride Mountain's excellent portfolio of wines. When the Pride family itself was apprised of the prospect of a wine made by two of its key employees, they encouraged Cortez and Rivera to go for it.

The rest can be found in the great storybook that has become Napa Valley. With very little money to start with, the first 350 cases of Corté Riva (a combination of Cortez and Rivera) made its appearance in 2003.

"It was most certainly a dream come true," added Nieves Cortez. "Everyone helped us get started. It's like that when you have little money to begin a project."

The wines literally took the wine industry and its periodicals by storm. A number of wines received mid-90s ratings and the public suddenly was keenly aware of the tiny entity of Corté Riva Vineyards. What made things more inimitable was the fact that Corté Riva Vineyards was the first winery owned by Filipino Americans (a second has recently come into existence). Also, the vineyard selection utilized in Corté Riva's success was somewhat unique to the Napa wine community.

Whereas many wineries tend to enter into long-term grape contracts, Corté Riva chose instead to go out and find the best grapes in each year's vintage. Almost thirty years of vineyard experience was behind the somewhat uncertain selection process.

"Both Lawrence and Romel believe in their years of experience," commented Nieves Cortez. "And, with the fact that we make relatively small amounts of our wines, we feel it is more practical to find the best grapes from each harvest and not be tied down to

certain vineyards who might or might not have really good grapes."

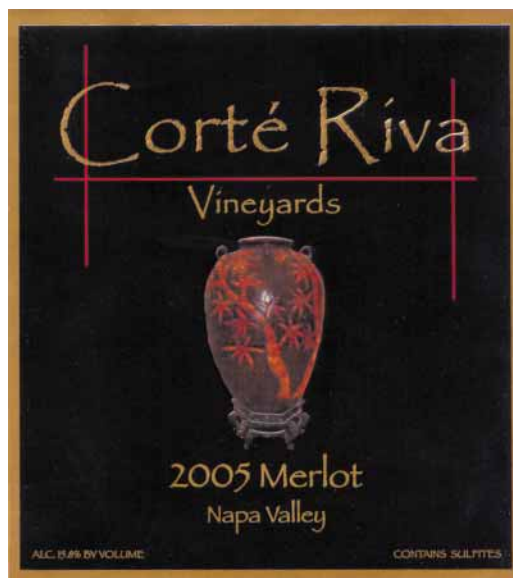
No one can argue with success, and Corté Riva Vineyards has certainly enjoyed its fair share of that. Production has risen to around 4,000 cases this year; a level that Nieves Cortez says is the plateau for the small winery.

"We cannot control our quality if we get any larger," she explained. "And quality is more important to all of us than quantity is."

What remains for Corté Riva is the expansion to a tasting facility that was in the planning stages until the current recession put the plans on hold.

"We still have one dream left," Cortez finalized. "That is to be able to have a tasting facility built to give our business some real exposure to Napa Valley visitors. We were ready to go some time ago, but the business downturn has affected everything in the Valley. We thank God that he didn't allow us to go ahead with the tasting room."

God is definitely on the side of Corté Riva Vineyards. Its superb wines are becoming harder to get while the great reviews and marks keep coming on the newer releases. It's a union made in heaven, by way of the Philippine Islands and St. Helena.



The road to great wine begins at your door.

TASTING NOTES





Corté Riva Vineyards

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

After years of working in the wine business, Corté Riva Vineyards was a natural step for Lawrence and me. We have worked from the ground up in the wine business. As emigrants in this country, a dream is always to make your own mark in this big world. We are proud to be Filipino Americans, who have let our dreams become a reality. Who would have guessed that Corté Riva Vineyards would be on the shelves of wine shops and restaurants in Japan, China, Philippines, Russia and the USA.

Napa Valley was filled with wineries that have already established their names for years. But we jumped into the wine business and we did not for see our future when we first started Corté Riva Vineyards. Starting with Merlot and eventually adding our other reds; Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah, Cabernet Franc, Zinfandel. Viognier is our newest addition. We celebrate for what we have.

With the support of our family and friends, Corté Riva is truly a small family owned business and we could not see it any other way. We focus on quality not quantity. We are always welcoming new wine enthusiasts to taste our wines. With that in mind, with hard work and determination, we will continue creating wines with great structure and mouth filling character that satisfies and excites your palates!

Thank you for this wonderful opportunity,

Nieves Cortez

TASTING NOTES

1,300 Cases Produced

Corté Riva Vineyards' 2005 Merlot was crafted from three well-known vineyards within Napa Valley: Kenefick, Blackbird, and Switchback Ridge – each renowned for producing excellent Bordeaux-style varietals. Known for their luscious, big red wines, Corté Riva has consistently garnered high scores since their inaugural 2003 release and the powerful, richly textured 2005 Merlot is their latest achievement with a **First Place** medal from Shanghai's *SIAL Wine Competition* and **91 Points** from *Robert Parker*: "Readers who enjoy mocha, espresso roast, chocolate, plum, and black cherry characteristics should check out the deep ruby/purple-colored 2005 Merlot. This is a big, chunky, fleshy, hedonistic effort that fills the mouth. It will drink well for 7-8 years." The Corté Riva 2005 Merlot exhibits a deep concentration of fruit flavors such as blackberries and black cherries, along with a big thick and juicy mid-palate and undeniable succulence. The teamwork between Lawrence Cortez, Romel Rivera, and Bob Foley is undeniable and their winemaking philosophy is apparent in this brilliant red wine. Try pairing Corté Riva's 2005 Merlot with barbecued steaks, lamb with herbed sauce, and chicken Parmesan. 100% Merlot. Enjoy now until 2012.

REORDERS

Corté Riva has been turning out some stunning wines since their inaugural vintage of 2003, and their latest achievement is the highly sought after 2005 Napa Valley Merlot – filled with compelling complexity and harmonious flavors that irresistibly keep you yearning for more.

The **Corté Riva 2005 Merlot** retails winery-direct for \$50.00 per bottle. As a *Platinum Series* member your very special pricing is as follows:

2-Bottle Members \$42.00 /bottle*

4-Bottle Members &

Multi-Series Members . . . \$38.00 /bottle*

*2 bottle min. order [Plus shipping]

Call: 1-800-266-8888

Fax: 1-800-266-8889

E-mail: orders@goldmedalwine.com

Website: www.GoldMedalWine.com