

# Cakebread Cellars



## 2001 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

### Vineyards

The grapes for our Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon come from two outstanding vineyards in the Oakville (55%) and Rutherford (45%) appellations of Napa Valley. Both are located in the benchlands of the Mayacamas Mountain Range, on the western side of the valley. The eastern exposures of these gently sloping, well-shaded hillside vineyards allow the grapes to mature at a slow, even pace, and their gravelly loam soils provide excellent drainage, permitting a precise calibration of the amount of water required to nourish the vines. Because of the superb quality of these vineyards, we've used them since 1995 to produce our Benchland Select bottling. In 2001, we harvested the fruit at full ripeness between October 4<sup>th</sup> and October 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Vintage 2001

The 2001 vintage was a bit of a roller coaster ride. A warm March led to early bud break, followed by April frosts that reduced the crop in some north coast regions. May and June were warm, ensuring a healthy bloom and grape set, but the weather turned cool in July. A brief mid-August heat spell reignited the ripening process, which slowed again with cool weather in late August and early September. Fortunately, a classic California Indian summer ensued, bringing the harvest to fruition in October with a moderate crop of fully ripened, small-berried Cabernet Sauvignon grapes blessed with ripe, intense flavors.

### Winemaking

After the grapes were crushed, the unfermented juice and skins (must) were cold-soaked in tank for two days prior to fermentation to enhance color and flavor extraction. After fermentation commenced, the juice was drained from one stainless steel tank to another and back again (a technique known as rack-and-return), to foster even more color and flavor extraction and encourage the formation of the phenolic compounds that produce smoother tannins. After fermentation completed, the juice and skins were allowed to macerate for an additional 3.5 weeks, with daily pumpovers, to further extract flavor and soften tannins. The wine was then pressed and transferred to French oak barrels, 75% new, where it aged 23 months prior to bottling in August 2003.

### Tasting Notes

Our 2001 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon offers a seductive aroma of perfectly ripened black fruits laden with scents of black figs, chocolate and smoky, toasty oak. On the palate, the wine delivers opulent, mouth-filling, ripe blackberry and black plum flavors balanced by firm tannins and crisp natural acidity. This lavishly flavored Napa Valley Cabernet, packed with deep, lush fruit, is delicious to drink now, but will handsomely repay 7-10 years of cellaring.

**Grape varieties:** 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

**Vineyards:** Oakville and Rutherford districts

**Harvest dates:** October 10<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>

**Fermentation:** 100% in stainless steel

**Barrel aging:** 23 months in French oak,  
75% new

**Alcohol:** 14.8%

**Total acidity:** 0.72 g/100 ml

**pH:** 3.8

**Bottled:** August 2003

**Released:** March 2004

**Winemaker:** Julianne Laks