

Cakebread Cellars



2004 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Vintage 2004

In 2004, an unusually balmy late winter, consistently warm spring and summer temperatures, and several late-summer heat spells resulted in the earliest Cabernet Sauvignon harvest in Napa Valley in over 20 years. The early budbreak, combined with light crop loads, produced grape clusters with small berries and intense, concentrated flavors, resulting in wines of great depth, intensity and structure. The grapes for our 2004 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon were harvested between September 4th and September 8th.

Vineyards

The grapes for our 2004 Napa Valley Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon, which contains 3% Syrah, came from several prime hillside vineyards in the Oakville and Rutherford appellations, including our own Hill Ranch in Rutherford. Situated along Napa's gently sloping western benchlands, these superb sites enjoy ideal eastern exposures (resulting in cooler afternoon temperatures) and well-drained soils, allowing their grapes to mature at a slow, even pace. We hand-harvest, ferment and age each vineyard block separately to optimize its distinctive character, then blend the lots to create a Cabernet Sauvignon of exceptional fragrance, depth and character.

Winemaking

We fermented the fruit from each vineyard site separately, using the tank sizes, yeast strains, fermentation temperatures and maceration techniques best suited to each lot. During fermentation and maceration (the period after fermentation when the juice and skins remain in contact), winemaker Julianne Laks daily assessed color, flavor and tannin extraction. After draining the wine off the skins, the 2004 Benchland Select was aged for a total of 22 months in French oak barrels, 48% new, selected to maximize the wine's character, development and expression of *terroir*. It was bottled in August, 2006.

Tasting Notes

Our 2004 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon displays forward, fragrant aromas of concentrated blackcurrant, blackberry and black plum fruit with fascinating secondary scents of cocoa powder, hazelnuts, earth and warm spices. On the densely packed palate, rich black fruit, dark chocolate and briary spice flavors are framed by supple, elegant tannins, leading to a long, savory finish. With a firm, deep structure and great reserves of lush, ripe fruit, this well-endowed Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon will drink deliciously for another 7-10 years.

Grape varieties: 97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Syrah **Alcohol:** 14.6%

Vineyards: Oakville and Rutherford districts

Total acidity: 0.62 g/100 ml

Harvest dates: September 4-8, 2004

pH: 3.74

Fermentation: 100% stainless steel

Bottled: August 2006

Barrel aging: 22 months in French oak,
48% new

Winemaker: Julianne Laks