

Cakebread Cellars



2013 Dancing Bear Ranch on Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Vineyards

Our Dancing Bear Ranch is a spectacular site on the steep, rugged slopes of Howell Mountain in northern Napa Valley. Divided into 24 separate blocks based on varietal type (cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc), sun exposure, soil profile and clonal selection, the vineyard is planted in dry, rocky, volcanic soils between 1,100 to 1,900 feet and enjoys a near 360-degree exposure, offering a diverse range of growing conditions. Because the vines grow high above the fog line, they receive the full attention of the summer sun and must work hard to accommodate our precision irrigation strategy. As a result, they are routinely stressed and yield small crops of intensely flavorful grapes. To ensure the fruit reaches full maturity, we carefully manage the crop on each vine to achieve optimal flavor development and the extraordinary quality for which Dancing Bear Cabernet Sauvignon is renowned.

Vintage 2013

In 2013, a warm, dry spring initiated early bud-break, ensured trouble-free vine flowering and grape set, and led to a consistently mild summer fostering steady, even ripening and grapes with wonderful flavor concentration. Our Dancing Bear fruit was night- and hand-harvested between September 14th and October 1st to maximize freshness and varietal intensity.

Winemaking

Given the stressed vines and small berries typical of Dancing Bear Ranch, our winemaking goal is to fully capture the fruit's intense mountain character while avoiding overly aggressive tannins. Winemaker Julianne Laks carefully monitors tannin levels in the juice and wine during fermentation and maceration. After the component lots of Dancing Bear achieve an optimal balance of fruit intensity and tannin, she drains the free run wines from their skins and ages them in French oak barrels prior to blending in the spring following the vintage. Our 2013 Dancing Bear – a blend of 93% cabernet sauvignon and 7% merlot representing five of the vineyard's distinctive clonal selections – spent a total of 22 months aging in French oak barrels, 56% new, prior to bottling on August 3rd, 2015.

Tasting Notes

Our Dancing Bear Cabernet Sauvignon reflects the intense characteristics of its rugged mountain *terroir* and the hard work required to cultivate this special site. The 2013 vintage displays dense aromas of ripe boysenberry, dark plum and cassis layered with scents of loam, forest-floor spice and dark chocolate. On the expansive palate, intense, concentrated flavors of blackberry, black cherry, boysenberry, plum and chocolate are balanced by well-structured, ripe tannins and culminate in a very long, persistent finish highlighting dark berry, earthy spice and mineral tones. Beautifully balanced and structured for long-term aging, this intense, complex mountain red is still a youngster and will benefit from another decade of aging.

Grape varieties: 93% cabernet sauvignon, 7% merlot

Vineyard: Dancing Bear Ranch, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Harvest dates: September 14th – October 1st, 2013

Fermentation: 100% in stainless steel tanks

Barrel aging: 22 months in French oak, 56% new

Alcohol: 15.1%

Total acidity: 0.65 g/100 ml

pH: 3.75

Bottled: August 3rd, 2015

Winemaker: Julianne Laks