

2004 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL MOUNTAIN

These Cabernet Sauvignons, made from only the best fruit from select vineyards, are quintessential representatives of some of Napa's most renowned appellations. They are produced in limited quantities, and only in years when the quality of the fruit and resulting wine are exceptional. Originally planted to Bordeaux grape varieties in 1877, this south-facing vineyard sits sixteen hundred feet above the valley floor. The wines of Howell Mountain are recognized for brawny tannins and a singular spiciness, characteristics this offering exudes.

Vintage

An early, warm start to spring was followed by cooler weather during flowering. This led to a smaller and more concentrated crop. A brief yet intense ripening period (temperatures hovered over 100° F for several days) allowed fruit to achieve superb ripeness while maintaining a generous balance of acidity and richness.

Vineyard

Our fruit is sourced from an exceptional high-elevation vineyard with volcanic soils in the Howell Mountain Appellation. Boasting a strong afternoon sun influence and a southwest exposure that's moderated by late afternoon breezes, this vineyard's Cabernet expresses strong spice and blueberry characteristics with an intense purity that's unrivalled. Cooler nights permit the berries to maintain their structure and acidity throughout the ripening process.

Winemaking

Hand harvested into small thirty-five pound boxes, the grapes were destemmed to tank for a three-day, pre-fermentation cold soak. The Howell Mountain fruit underwent extended maceration to further develop the tannin structure. The free run was separated from the press wine and raked into thin-stave French chateau-style oak barrels (ninety percent of which were new), where the wine was aged for eighteen months. In order to preserve its inherent concentration and rich texture, the wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

Winemaker Notes

A most resounding example of lavish Howell Mountain decadence, this wine possesses deep aromas of black cherries, lavender oil, creosote, and cedar molasses, balanced against a hint of bouquet garni and crushed flowers. In the palate, a blend of kirsch and spicy clove transcends into dark chocolate, anise, and those distinctive mountain tannins, finishing off with a soft landing of plush fruits and a pointed acidity.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alcohol: 14.7%
Production: 219 cases

Bottled: July 2006
Released: February 2008