# Cakebread Cellars



# 2009 Dancing Bear Ranch on Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

## **Vineyards**

The grapevines in our Dancing Bear Ranch on Howell Mountain in eastern Napa Valley are planted on steep hillsides reaching elevations over 1,800 feet. These hardy vines are rooted in well-drained volcanic soils and enjoy excellent sun exposure, prompting their fruit to ripen earlier in the harvest season than do our valley floor vineyards. To ensure the grapes reach full physiological maturity, we carefully manage the crop load on each vine for optimal ripening and flavor development. The blend changes each year; the 2009 Dancing Bear is 94% Cabernet Sauvignon (representing four different clonal selections) and 6% Cabernet Franc.

### Vintage 2009

In 2009, plentiful spring rains in Napa Valley deferred the need for early irrigation, resulting in small berries with deeply concentrated flavors. Summer was consistently cool, which allowed for slow, steady ripening and the parallel development of grape sugars and flavors, resulting in superbly balanced wines. We harvested the grapes for the 2009 Dancing Bear between October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> with a superb balance of ripe fruit flavors, supple tannins and bright acidity.

#### Winemaking

The challenge for Cakebread Cellars winemaker Julianne Laks in crafting our Dancing Bear Ranch is to fully capture the intense mountain character of the fruit without extracting overly aggressive tannins. Julianne's approach is to carefully monitor tannin levels in the juice and wine during fermentation and maceration. After the component lots of the 2009 Dancing Bear had achieved an optimal balance of fruit intensity and ripe tannins, the free run wines were drained from their skins and transferred to French oak barrels, 41% new, for aging. In all, the 2009 vintage spent 20 months in barrel prior to bottling in July, 2011.

#### **Tasting Notes**

The nose of our 2009 Dancing Bear Cabernet offers the pure, high-toned, deeply concentrated aromas we have come to associate with this wine: ripe dark cherry, boysenberry, blackberry and plum fruit complemented by subtle earth, floral spice, forest floor and cocoa tones. In the mouth, the wine is rich, deep and juicy with mouthfilling dark cherry, boysenberry, cassis, plum and cedar flavors that take on a pronounced brambly spice tone in the remarkably long, savory finish. While this vintage of Dancing Bear is precociously forward in its youth, its superb structure and deep, expansive fruit suggest it will develop beautifully in bottle for at least a decade.

**Grape varieties**: 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc **Alcohol**: 15.1%

Vineyard: Dancing Bear Ranch, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley Total acidity: 0.73 g/100 ml

Harvest dates: October 2-5, 2009 pH: 3.77

**Fermentation**: 100% in stainless steel **Bottled**: July, 2011

**Barrel aging**: 20 months in French oak, 41% new Winemaker: Julianne Laks