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 1,400 to 1,800 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 work hard to accommodate our precision irrigation strategy. Consequently, 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.

2014 Vintage
2014 was another in a series of excellent vintages in northern California. After a rainy February, which rejuvenated the vines, a warm, dry spring led to early bud-break, flowering and grape set. Summer was consistently mild with few heat spikes, allowing our Dancing Bear grapes to ripen slowly and evenly while developing impressively concentrated flavors.

Winemaking
Our Dancing Bear Cabernet Sauvignon is a perfect example of small-lot, handcrafted winemaking. Given the stressed vines and small berries characteristic of Dancing Bear Ranch – a result of extremely well-drained soils and the rigors of mountain viticulture – we are intent on capturing our fruit’s intense mountain character while avoiding overly aggressive tannins. Winemaker Julianne Laks carefully monitors tannin levels in the wine during fermentation and maceration to limit over-extraction. There is an emphasis on finesse within the power of big, red wine. After the component lots of Dancing Bear achieve an optimal balance of fruit intensity, color and tannin, she drains the free run wines from their skins and transfers them to French oak barrels for aging. Our 2014 Dancing Bear – a blend of 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Cabernet Franc representing eight of the vineyard’s distinctive clonal selections – spent a total of 21 months aging in French oak barrels, 64% new, prior to bottling on July 18th, 2016.

Tasting Notes
Extravagantly fragrant aromas of ripe boysenberry, blackberry, black cherry and dark plum are joined by fascinating floral and forest floor spice scents in the captivating nose of this extraordinary mountain cabernet. Immensely rich and flavorful on the palate with deep and juicy boysenberry, blackberry, dark plum and spice flavors, the wine finishes with intense fruit, spice and mineral flavors accented by savory French oak and dark chocolate tones. Impeccably balanced by well-structured, yet supple tannins, our 2014 Dancing Bear Cabernet Sauvignon is amazingly delicious now, but will more than reward another decade of aging.

Grape varieties: 98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol: 15.1%
Vineyard: Dancing Bear Ranch, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley
Total acidity: 0.67g/100 ml
Harvest dates: September 20th – October 6th, 2014
pH: 3.63
Fermentation: 100% in stainless steel tanks
Bottled: July 18th, 2016
Barrel aging: 21 months in French oak, 64% new
Winemaker: Julianne Laks