2000 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon
Napa Valley

Vintage 2000
The 2000 growing season in Napa Valley was atypically cool, which resulted in the grapes for our Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon ripening slowly and evenly before being harvested at optimum maturity between September 27th and October 19th. With the exception of a brief heat spell in June, the valley experienced cool summer temperatures and an early fall. Combined with a few days of light rain in September, these conditions kept the grapes fresh, maintained high levels of acidity, and allowed the fruit extended “hang time” on the vine, which produced deep colors and ripe, bright flavors. While the crop size was healthy, the clusters themselves were small, as were the berries, ensuring impressively concentrated cabernet flavors in the grapes.

Vineyards
Fruit for the Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon comes from two outstanding vineyards in the Oakville and Rutherford appellations, both located in the rolling hills, or benchlands, of the Mayacamas Mountain Range, on the western side of Napa Valley. The eastern exposures of these gently sloping, well-shaded hillside vineyards allow the grapes to mature at a slow, even pace, and their gravelly loam soils provide excellent drainage, permitting a precise calibration of the amount of water required to nourish the vines. As a result of their superb quality, we’ve highlighted these magnificent vineyards since 1995 in our Benchland Select bottling, which is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon.

Winemaking
After the grapes were crushed, the unfermented juice and skins (must) were cold-soaked in tank for three days at 52 degrees prior to fermentation to enhance extraction of color and flavor. After fermentation commenced, the juice was drained from one stainless steel tank to another, and back again (a technique known as rack-and-return), to foster even more color and flavor extraction and encourage the formation of the phenolic compounds that produce smoother tannins. After fermentation completed and the juice and skins were allowed to macerate for an additional few weeks, the wine was pressed and transferred to French oak barrels, three-quarters new, where it aged for 26 months prior to bottling in December 2002.

Tasting Notes
The 2000 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon displays an elegance that derives from the loamy soils and afternoon cooling enjoyed by vineyards located in the western hills of Napa Valley. It exhibits a deep, dark ruby color with a rich, complex aroma of ripe black fruits, cedar, dusty chocolate, tar and leather. On the palate, the wine is round and supple, with soft, rich, dark fruit flavors of black cherries and cassis mixed with hints of chocolate. Although this wine will reward several years of additional bottle age, it is delicious to drink now.

Grape varieties: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alcohol: 13.9%
Vineyards: 100% Napa Valley
Total acidity: 0.63 g/mls
Harvest dates: September 27-October 19
pH: 3.75
Fermentation: 100% in stainless steel
Bottled: December 2002
Barrel aging: 26 months in French oak, Released: August 2003
75% new
Winemaker: Julianne Laks