

Cakebread Cellars



2007 Dancing Bear Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Vineyards

Now a decade old, the Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc vines in our Dancing Bear Ranch on Howell Mountain in eastern Napa Valley are coming into their own. Hugging steep hillsides at elevations ranging from 1,200 to 1,900 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 2007 Dancing Bear is a blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot and 7% Cabernet Franc.

Vintage 2007

2007 was an exceptional red wine vintage in Napa Valley. A dry, mild winter and unusually warm spring prompted early budbreak and bloom, followed by a perfect grape set in June. Summer was consistently mild, with warm days and cool nights, ideal conditions for achieving maximum ripening and flavor development while retaining healthy levels of acidity. A warm early September and a modest crop got the harvest off to an early, fast-paced start, allowing us to pick our Dancing Bear Ranch grapes in perfect condition between September 14th and 27th.

Winemaking

The trio of red Bordeaux varieties in our Dancing Bear Ranch on Howell Mountain presents Cakebread Cellars winemaker Julianne Laks with both challenges and opportunities. The primary challenge is to capture the intense mountain character of the fruit without extracting overly assertive tannins, which Julianne addresses through constant monitoring of the juice and wine during fermentation and maceration. One opportunity is to co-ferment a portion of the Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc to soften the former's tannin and enhance complexity, a technique utilized in 2007. After all the component lots of the 2007 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 barrels for aging prior to blending in spring 2008. In all, the 2007 vintage spent 22 months in French oak, 47% new, before being bottled in August, 2009.

Tasting Notes

Our 2007 Dancing Bear displays the intriguing dance of intensity and elegance that has become this mountain wine's trademark. High-toned aromas of freshly crushed boysenberries, dark cherries and forest-floor spice (imagine walking in a pine forest after a light summer rainfall) introduce a big, dense, tightly wound palate packed with marvelously rich and concentrated black cherry, boysenberry and blackberry flavors, which are enhanced by savory clove, cocoa and vanilla tones. Beautifully structured and with great reserves of intense fruit supported by round, beautifully integrated tannins, this dramatic mountain red will delight wine lovers now and over the next decade.

Grape varieties: 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc

Vineyard: Dancing Bear Ranch, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Harvest dates: September 14-27, 2007

Fermentation: 100% in stainless steel

Barrel aging: 22 months in French oak, 47% new

Alcohol: 14.9%

Total acidity: 0.62 g/100 ml

pH: 3.68

Bottled: August, 2009

Winemaker: Julianne Laks