



APPELLATION: HOWELL MOUNTAIN
VARIETAL BLEND: 100% CABERNET SAUVIGNON
PRODUCTION: 8 BARRELS
WINEMAKER: MATTHEW RORICK

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Rich dark ruby purple in color. Classic Bordeaux-style aromas of black cherry, cassis, cedar and wet slate are complimented by lush Californian notes of black plum, mission fig and dry-aged beef. Ultra-rich fruit and huge, ripe tannins on the palate feature prominently in this powerhouse of a Cabernet Sauvignon. Juicy, ripe plum dominates the rich, creamy finish of this massively structured wine. We produced just over 200 cases of this delicious mountain wine.

WINEMAKING

Upon arrival at the winery, our Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon grape clusters were hand-sorted with our exercising strict control over the quality of fruit. We opted for a long, cold soak prior to fermentation in order to extract as much color and flavor as possible. Allowed to ferment with 'native' yeasts, the juice and skins received a combination of pumpovers which were decided on by taste alone on a daily basis. Once fermentation had completed, the wine was macerated on the skins to increase extract and allow the tannin structure to soften. Aged for 20 months in 100% French oak from select coopers including Taransaud, Sylvain, Darnajou, and Nadalie, this wine was handled as little as possible all the way from fermentation tank to barrel to bottle in order to allow it to continue to deepen in richness and complexity. This wine was bottled without fining or filtering in order to assure that the pure fruit flavors were held intact.

VINEYARDS

The fruit for our Elizabeth Spencer Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon is sourced from a small, single vineyard near the ridgeline of Howell Mountain. This vineyard features a southwestern to northwestern facings at a high elevation. We select small blocks from within the vineyard and blend them to deliver the perfect combination of ripeness and structure. This diversity within the vineyard allows us to produce a Cabernet Sauvignon which we feel is truly representative of the Howell Mountain Appellation.

VINTAGE

At the start of the growing season, 2006 appeared to be on the same path as the 2005 had been – a wet spring and a cooler than average summer – until midsummer, when a two week heat wave arrived. Thankfully, our Cabernet Sauvignon grapes were not adversely affected by the high temperatures. Temperatures decreased significantly following the heat wave, and the cool finish to the growing season produced grapes that were fully rich in flavor, aromatically complex, and possessed of classic Bordeaux character with the capacity for long aging.

Elizabeth Spencer

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