

Cakebread Cellars



2017 Dancing Bear Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon **Howell Mountain, Napa Valley**

Our Dancing Bear Ranch is perched high above northern Napa Valley on the steep, rugged slopes of Howell Mountain. Planted in dry, rocky, volcanic soils elevated between 1,100 and 1,900 feet, the vines are subject to nearly 360 degrees of exposure to the elements. As a result, vines in this location are routinely stressed and yield small crops of intensely flavorful grapes. The vines are separated into 24 separate blocs based on sun exposure, soil profile, clonal selection and varietal type (cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc). We precisely manage and irrigate the crop on each vine to achieve optimal flavor development and the extraordinary quality for which Dancing Bear Cabernet Sauvignon is renowned.

Vintage 2017

Cool spring weather gave us ideal conditions for flowering and “berry set”—when each tiny flower turns into a young grape. Temperatures were moderate through the summer, for slow, even ripening, then turned warmer during harvest, which sped things up and delivered small clusters with tremendous varietal character and balanced acidity. After several years of drought, we were happy to see ample rainfall in Napa Valley during the winter of 2017. Grapes on our Dancing Bear Ranch are hand-harvested overnight for optimal expression of their namesake estate.

Winemaking

Our winemaking goal is to fully capture the fruit’s intense mountain character while avoiding overly aggressive tannins. Winemaker Stephanie Jacobs carefully monitors tannin levels in the juice and wine during maceration and fermentation. After the component lots of Dancing Bear achieve an optimal balance of fruit intensity and tannin, she drains the free-run wines from their skins and ages them in French oak barrels. Our 2017 Dancing Bear is a blend of 89% cabernet sauvignon, 10% cabernet franc and 1% merlot representing five of the vineyard’s distinctive clonal selections. This wine spent a total of 22 months aging in French oak barrels, 60% new, prior to bottling in 2020.

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Tasting Notes

Aromas of boysenberry, black cherry, and fig with accents of forest floor are highlighted in the 2017 vintage. On the palate, intense, concentrated flavors of blackberry, black cherry and boysenberry are balanced by traces of minerality and opulent tannins with a dense, powerful black fruit finish. Beautifully balanced and structured for long-term aging, this intense, complex mountain wine will continue to unfold in the bottle for the next decade.

Blend: 89% cabernet sauvignon,
10% cabernet franc, 1% merlot

Vineyard: Dancing Bear Ranch,
Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Harvest dates: 9/12/17 - 9/30/17

Fermentation: 100% in stainless steel tanks

Barrel aging: 22 months in French oak,
60% new

Alcohol: 14.9%

Total acidity: 0.70 g/100 ml

pH: 3.65

Bottled: August 2019

Winemaker: Stephanie Jacobs