



BLACK SEARS

## WINEMAKING

At Black Bears, we believe that the role of a winemaker is to bring out the expression of the fruit, the terroir, and the vintage. Black Bears wines bestow upon the palate a sense of the place from which they come—a rugged, gorgeous, mountaintop estate overlooking two magnificent valleys.

Our wines are all estate-grown. The fruit comes from only one vineyard—ours. Which means we have full control over our source of fruit: when and how much to prune, how to manage the soil, which fruit to drop, and when to harvest. This enables us to attain the quality and consistency in the vineyard that is required to make great wines year after year.

Great wine starts in the vineyard, in the soil, in the sunshine, and it starts with farming. But from there, it also requires a masterful winemaker.

Thomas Brown handcrafts the Black Bears wines in small lots and with great care. Born in Sumter, South Carolina, Thomas developed an interest in wine while at the University of Virginia where he studied Economics and English. Later, he expanded his knowledge of wines from all the world's great regions while working at All Seasons Wine Shop in Calistoga. Beginning at Turley Estate in the late 1990s, Thomas continues to hone his craft at Outpost, Black Bears, and his own project, Rivers-Marie, among others.

The Black Bears winemaking philosophy is non-interventionist and simple, eschewing the latest fads and technology. And that dovetails perfectly with the organic and biodynamic vineyard practices employed in the Black Bears vineyards. The grapes are picked by hand at the peak of ripeness and immediately crushed and destemmed. The wines are cold-soaked and fermented in stainless steel tanks; and once dry, they are pressed off the skins and barreled in 100% french oak. There they will age and evolve underground in the Black Bears cave for between 18 and 22 months before they are bottled. Once bottled, they will age for another year or more prior to release.