



BLACK SEARS

THE VINEYARDS

The Black Sears vineyards lie nestled among hundreds of acres of wild oak forests at the top of Howell Mountain. Approximately twenty-four acres of the four-hundred-twenty acre ranch have been planted as vineyard over an east-facing hillside where an apple orchard once stood.

Looking down from high above the valley fog, the vineyard shares its home and its view with black bears, mountain lions, hawks and rattlesnakes. At just over 2400 feet, it is the highest vineyard on Howell Mountain and is among the highest vineyards in all of Napa Valley. The unique climate of Howell Mountain produces wines with a firm structure, intense fruit flavors, earthy spice, and round acidity. The ashy, iron-laden soils are perfectly suited for growing full-bodied, peppery Zinfandel and earthy, rich Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. These mountaintop conditions and the varied hillside microclimates combine to produce wines of complex structure, incredible intensity, and the intrepid flavors of a remote and distinctive terrain.

The first plantings in 1975 were devoted to Zinfandel. There are approximately seventeen dry-farmed acres of Zinfandel on St. George rootstock with the bud wood coming from the Hayne Vineyard in St. Helena - one of Zinfandel's "Heritage Clones."

The six-acre Cabernet Sauvignon parcel was originally planted with clones 191 and 337 on AXR rootstock in 1985. In the early 2000s, it was replanted on 420A rootstock, an acre of See-clone Cabernet was added, and two small parcels were budded to Cabernet Franc.

Various fruit and nut trees (including some of the original orchard's apple trees), lavender, rosemary, sage, wildflowers and a variety of other plants are incorporated in our vineyard. These serve not only to beautify the hillside, but also to encourage the presence of beneficial insects and to mitigate the detrimental effects that monoculture practices can have on the land.

The Black Sears family is committed to caring for the land we love and call home, farming organically and biodynamically in our vineyard as well as in our orchards and gardens. And it shows. Wine lovers who have enjoyed the fruit and the wines of the Black Sears vines will testify: "there's just something special about that vineyard."