



## 2006 Robert Craig Howell Mountain • Napa Valley Zinfandel

*Total Production:* Only 490 cases

### Winemaker Notes

This beautifully balanced, luscious wine delivers all the qualities that make Howell Mountain Zinfandels so distinctive - concentrated, long-lived essence of black raspberry and mountain pepper backed by finely textured tannins. Picked in small lots, the berries were fully ripe and deeply flavored, creating a stylish Zinfandel with layers of flavors.

### Vineyard Characteristics

If Cabernet Sauvignon is “king” on Howell Mountain, then Zinfandel is definitely the “crown prince.” Just up the road from our winery is the Black Sears Estate, where Joyce Black Sears and Jerre Sears have been nurturing Zinfandel grapes of great renown for over 25 years. Their vineyard tops out at 2400 feet, making this the highest vineyard on the mountain. Biodynamically farmed, the vineyard’s soils are Red Aiken and Forward Loams on an east-facing slope, offering an ideal location for growing Zinfandel.

What makes Howell Mountain such a special region for Zinfandel? First, the well-drained, rocky volcanic soils cause vines to struggle for existence. This stress produces small, intensely flavored berries that are ideal building blocks for Zinfandel and Cabernet. Also Zinfandel grapes love warm weather, but too much heat can translate into high-acid, high-alcohol wines. Howell Mountain has the perfect combination of moderate days and warm summer nights to produce fruit with balanced acidity and sugar.

### Tasting Notes

**Aroma:** Smooth and creamy on the nose, opening up with bright black raspberry and mountain lilac, followed by notes of wild pepper and sandalwood. **Flavors:** Black raspberry and wild berry follow through on the palate, leading into pronounced black and white pepper, mineral notes and finishing with vanilla cream and spice. **Finish:** Beautiful, strong finish in which the fruit and supple tannins are in harmony. **General:** This is a Cabernet-lovers Zinfandel. Decanting for 30 minutes is recommended.

### Wine Information

*Harvest date:* October 17

*Average sugar:* 25.4° Brix

*TA:* .61

*pH:* 3.82

*Alcohol:* 14.9%

*Barrel Aging:* 17 months in 30% Hungarian and 70% French oak

*Bottling Date:* March 2008

*Price:* California suggested retail price is \$50.00 per bottle.

*Release date:* May 2008