

FOR: **BLACKBIRD VINEYARDS**

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V I N E Y A R D S

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BLACKBIRD VINEYARDS HAS REASON TO CELEBRATE

A successful 2007 Harvest and Two New Vintage Releases

ST. HELENA, CA (May 2008)—Recognized as an ultra-premium producer of Pomerol-inspired wines, Blackbird Vineyards has proven in just three short vintages that Merlot-driven wines can compete with their French and American counterparts. With the fifth harvest behind them, the team at Blackbird Vineyards reflects on the unpredictable yet productive growing season of 2007. Winegrower Aaron Pott had to constantly adapt to the changing conditions in the vineyard, but in the end harvested some of the highest quality fruit Winemaker Sarah Gott has worked with since Blackbird Vineyards' inception in 2003. "With the lower yields and steady and mild temperatures, allowing for longer hang time, overall quality from the Blackbird vineyard is excellent. In 2007, wines are showing intensity of color and flavor, ripe tannin, and a seamless balance of sweetness and acidity," says Gott.

The 2007 growing season was one fraught with both challenges and successes. The year started out cold and dry; nighttime temperatures dropped into the single digits and a dry pattern continued into the season with only 60% of normal rainfall typically found in the valley. In addition, spring proved unseasonably warm and resulted in an early bud break. The low rainfall levels halted canopy production, but this production "intermission" allowed the Renteria Vineyard Management team the opportunity to further refine the fruit. The result: only the highest quality grapes were left on the vine.

Summer was temperate, until a heat spike around Labor Day interrupted the modest valley temperatures and provoked rumblings of an early harvest. Fears were laid to rest when temperatures subsided after a few days and remained mild until the late September harvest.

On September 29, 2007, harvest workers met for a "midnight harvest" of Blackbird's vineyards. Grapes were picked in the middle of the night—when the acids and brix levels in the grapes were at an optimum balance. "By harvesting at night," winegrower Aaron Pott says, "we ensure that the grapes are in a perfect condition for their transaction from vine row to winery sorting table." This nocturnal harvest served as Pott's formal welcome to the Blackbird Vineyards family.

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The 2007 harvest also brought the announcement of Blackbird Vineyards' latest progeny, Paramour, an elegant blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc in almost equal parts. The 2005 Napa Valley Proprietary Red is in its third release and is a rich, supple wine comprised of 96% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Sauvignon.

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“The 2005 vintage wines are very exciting ones for Blackbird Vineyards, with good fruit concentration and ripeness that produced wines with well-balanced and mature tannins and flavors,” says Gott. “It’s the best one yet.”

Founded in 2003 by Michael Polenske, Blackbird Vineyards is an artisanal producer of Pomerol-inspired wines from the Napa Valley. Planted in 1997, the estate vineyard is located in the heart of the Oak Knoll District—a region appreciated for its moderate climate and deep, gravelly soils. The vineyard’s valley floor topography presents optimum growing conditions for Winemaker Sarah Gott and Winegrower Aaron Pott to produce an elegantly styled, appropriately balanced red wine that offers short- and long-term cellaring potential. Limited quantities are available through an allocated mailing list direct from the winery and in the finer restaurants and hotels around the world.

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