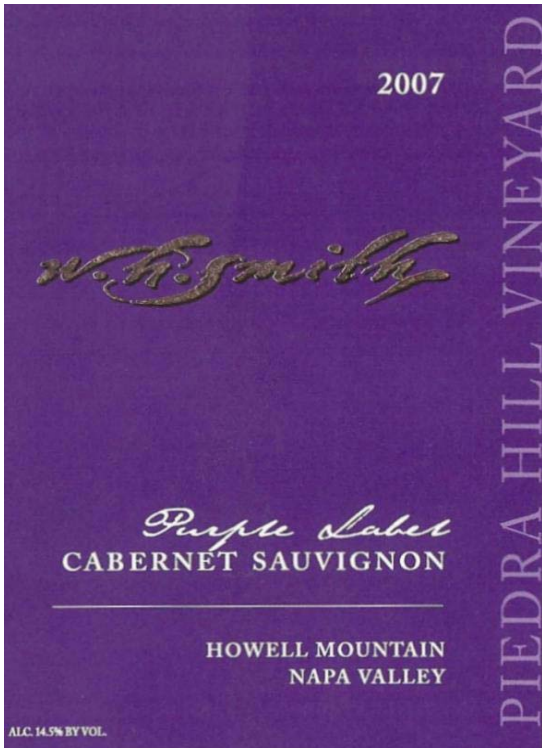


W.H. Smith

**2007 Piedra Hill Vineyard - Purple Label
Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon**



The Vineyard:

The Piedra Hill Vineyard is becoming synonymous with award winning Cabernet-based wines from Howell Mountain. Bill and Joan Smith own, farm, and make wine from this stunning six acre vineyard. The vineyard is dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon, primarily clones #337, #191, #341, #338, and BV 4, and the other four Bordeaux varieties: Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec and Cabernet Franc. Piedra Hill Vineyard sits above the fog line, so average temperatures are five to ten degrees cooler than on the valley floor. This creates higher natural acidity in the grapes and leads to even ripening of the fruit. The hallmarks of the Piedra Hill wines continue to be intensity of fruit and tremendous balance.

The Winemaking:

The focus of Piedra Hill Cabernet Purple Label is on fruit, richness and perfectly integrated tannins. The magic is in the removal of seed tannin. Grape seeds are removed at every step along the way – during the long, cold soak (6-8 days at 40°) and during fermentation via a process called ‘rack and return’ or delestage. The result of this

process is a gorgeous, fruit-driven wine, wonderful to drink in its youth yet quite age-worthy. Although we have often referred to Purple Label as our ‘barrel selection’, Bill would actually call it a ‘fermentation selection’. Bill and his assistant winemaker, Carlos, are constantly evaluating the lots during fermentation, looking for the most intense floral and blackberry fruit. These selected fermentations eventually become the beginning of Purple Label. Then they blend and taste from different barrels and continue to modify the blend. Bill has been making wine for 30 years and does it more by ‘feel’ than recipe. Bill calls it ‘black magic’ we call it Purple Label!

The Wine:

Purple Label has great balance between acidity and fruit, making this a strikingly elegant wine. Dark plums and blackberries greet the nose and palate. Purple Label is approachable now, but also made to last.

Food Pairing:

The sophistication of this wine lends itself to slow-braised short ribs in a garlic and Cabernet reduction. How about a grilled tri-tip with an espresso glaze? This wine can handle it.

Press:

95 Points Wine Enthusiast December 2009

Technical Information:

Appellation: Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Aging: 2 years in 80% new oak -selection of Boutes, Radoux, Taransaud, Ermitage and Treuil

Harvest Date: October 6, 2007

Alcohol: 14.5%

Bottled: July 2009

Production: 432 cases

Release Date: July 1, 2010