

**Spence Vineyards****2004 Cabernet Sauvignon
(Howell Mountain)**

After just two vintages producing a Howell Mountain Cabernet, the folks at this tiny property have produced the best and most terroir-specific Cab in its short history. Winemaker Marco DiGiulio has blended the grapes from the Spence's miniscule (one acre) vineyard and added some fruit from Dennis John's White Cottage Vineyard next door. He managed to express the specific aromas and flavors that are inherent to Howell Mountain.

Thus, we have a **Spence Cabernet Sauvignon** that exhibits minerality and slate from the soils and aromas of deliciously warm black fruit from the vines. Right now, that fruit is very sweet upfront but it opens to reveal a good structural backbone of fine-grained tannins and acidity. There's some power here, as well as finesse. This is decidedly a mountain wine, so hold it for a couple of years and then drink it over the ensuing decade.

The Spence vineyard, with its red volcanic soil at nearly 1,900 feet above the Napa Valley floor, has deeper soils than most other vineyards in the region. It has since been expanded to three acres. It's situated on the knoll of a hill above a canyon that opens to the valley floor. Warm breezes create a convection effect that bathes the grapes in circulating air which is not felt a few hundred yards to either side of the vineyard.

The wine was aged for 22 months in French barrels. The stated alcohol is 14.5 percent, and there were less than 200 cases produced.

Reviewed December 7, 2007 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Spence Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Cabernet Sauvignon

Appellation: [Howell Mountain](#)

Grape: [Cabernet Sauvignon](#)

Price: \$65.00

THE REVIEWER**Alan Goldfarb**

Alan Goldfarb has been writing about and reviewing wine for 17 years. His reviews have been published in the *St. Helena Star*, *San Jose Mercury*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Decanter*, and *Wine Enthusiast*, among others. Not once has he used a point system, star system, or an iconic symbol to quantify a wine. What counts in Mr. Goldfarb's criteria when judging a wine is: how it tastes in the glass; is it well-constructed; its food compatibility; and presence of redeeming regional attributes.