Cakebread Cellars



2008 Zinfandel Red Hills Lake County

Vineyards

This is our 5th vintage of Zinfandel from Snow's Lake Vineyard in the acclaimed Red Hills appellation of Lake County. Located at the foot of Mt. Konocti, an ancient volcano, this prime Zinfandel site boasts a 2,100-foot-plus elevation, a perfect southwestern exposure, and vines rooted in mineral-rich, red volcanic soils. Snow Lake's hot sunny days, windy afternoons and nights chilled by breezes from nearby Clear Lake provide ideal conditions for California's heritage grape variety. The vineyard is planted to three distinguished clones of Zinfandel, including Primitivo and heritage selections from Amador and Mendocino counties. In 2008, we harvested this choice fruit at ideal ripeness levels between August 29th and September 30th.

Vintage 2008

2008 was a topsy-turvy vintage in northern California. The year began with heavy winter rains, segued into drought conditions in early spring, then erupted into the worst frost season in 35 years in March and April. Coupled with poor weather during bloom and stress-inducing heat during grape set, these conditions dramatically reduced the size of the crop in many vineyards, greatly concentrating flavors and accelerating ripening. Clear, mild summer weather, with warm days and cool nights, brought our Lake County grapes to fruition between August 29th and September 30th.

Winemaking

Our first four vintages of Snow's Lake Zinfandel were 100% varietal. In 2008, we decided to blend 11% Petite Sirah from another block in an adjoining vineyard to deepen the wine's color and enhance its complexity and longevity. All the fruit was night-harvested to maximize freshness and purity and to protect our vineyard workers from summer's heat. Our three clonal selections of Zinfandel, plus the Petite Sirah, were harvested, fermented and aged separately. After a short, warm fermentation in stainless steel tanks to fully extract color, flavor and tannins, the wines remained on their skins for several more weeks to further enhance color and flavor extraction while softening tannins. After pressing the wines off the skins, we transferred the lots to French oak barrels, 46% new, where they aged before the final blend was assembled the following spring. The finished wine aged another eight months in barrel before bottling in February, 2010.

Tasting Notes

Our 2008 Red Hills Lake County Zinfandel offers a beguilingly fresh nose of ripe red and black fruits – cherry, wild raspberry and blackberry – supplemented by fragrant notes of mineral, mountain spice and vanilla. On the big-bodied, smoothly textured and beautifully balanced palate, juicy black cherry and wild berry flavors take center stage, with refreshing flint, mineral and dusty blackberry tones filling the long, complex finish. The wine's supple, well-knit tannins and perfectly balanced acidity provide the structure for 3-5 years' aging, while its wonderful mix of rich, forward fruit and Snow Lake's distinctive *terroir* make it delicious for current drinking.

Grape variety: 89% Zinfandel, 11% Petite Sirah **Vineyards**: 100% Lake County, Red Hills appellation **Harvest dates**: August 29 – September 30, 2008

Fermentation: stainless steel tanks

Barrel aging: 15 months in 46% new French oak barrels

Alcohol: 15.3%

Total acidity: 0.62 g/100 ml

pH: 3.89

Bottled: February, 2010 **Winemaker**: Julianne Laks