

# Cakebread Cellars



## 2012 Merlot, Napa Valley

### Vineyards

Ninety-six percent of the grapes for our 2012 Napa Valley Merlot came from our estate Suscol Springs Ranch in southeastern Napa Valley, a vineyard planted primarily to Bordeaux varieties and featuring a hilly topography, rocky, well-drained soils, and a desirable southern exposure. Because Suscol Springs is a cool, windy site, it fosters bright acidity in our grapes, lifting the flavors of our merlot and providing excellent structure for aging.

### Vintage 2012

2012 was a near-ideal growing season in Napa Valley, with a warm, dry spring fostering early budbreak and trouble-free flowering and grape set. Consistently mild summer weather free of rain or unwelcome heat spikes allowed us to harvest our merlot grapes with an optimal balance of ripe, concentrated fruit flavors and lively acidity.

### Winemaking

We ferment our various vineyard lots of merlot in a mix of small closed and open-top stainless steel tanks, pumping the fermenting juice over the 'cap' of skins and other solids that form at the top of the tank to fully extract color, flavor and tannin from the skins. Once fermentation completes, we transfer the new wines to carefully selected French oak barrels (40% new in 2012), where they age for six months before being blended. The blended wine then spends an additional 12 months in barrel prior to bottling.

### Tasting Notes

Our 2012 Napa Valley Merlot immediately captures attention with its perfumed black cherry, red plum and blackberry aromas, which are nicely complemented by hints of mineral and dried herbs. Boasting considerable depth and concentration on the palate, the wine offers rich, vibrant, dark cherry and plum flavors, with notes of sage, tea-leaf spice and a flinty minerality adding zest to the long, cherry-laced finish. Immensely appealing now, this fragrant, delicious merlot will profit from another 5-7 years' aging.

**Composition:** 86% merlot, 13% cabernet sauvignon, 1% syrah

**Vineyards:** Napa Valley, 80% estate

**Harvest dates:** October 2-16, 2012

**Fermentation:** 100% stainless steel

**Barrel aging:** 18 months in French oak barrels, 40% new

**Alcohol:** 14.7%

**Total acidity:** 0.65 g/100 ml

**pH:** 3.51

**Bottled:** April, 2014

**Winemaker:** Julianne Laks