

2015 Chardonnay, Cuttings Wharf Vineyard Carneros Napa Valley

Vineyards

Our Cuttings Wharf vineyard in the Carneros district of southern Napa Valley boasts six high-quality French Dijon clones of chardonnay, all planted in the shallow clay loam soils common to Carneros's rolling eastern plains. Subject to foggy mornings and cool afternoon breezes from nearby San Pablo Bay, Carneros is Napa Valley's coolest growing region and thus ideal for the cultivation of chardonnay. In 2015, we blended five of our clones (75, 95, 96, 124 and 158) from special blocks in the vineyard to craft this beautifully fresh, flavorful and textured wine.

Vintage 2015

The 2015 vintage produced a notably light crop. A warm, dry winter fostered early bud-break, and consistently mild summer weather, with a few late-season heat spikes, led to the earliest harvest in Cakebread Cellars' 43-year history. The light crop yielded small chardonnay clusters and berries boasting remarkably intense, concentrated flavors. We harvested the fruit between August 14th and 19th with an ideal balance of sugars and acidity.

Winemaking

Night-harvesting and whole-cluster-pressing of our Cuttings Wharf Chardonnay fruit extracted the freshest, purest juice possible. We fermented 92% of the juice in French oak barrels with the balance fermented in concrete 'eggs' long popular in Europe. The concrete fermenters accentuate the wine's weight, texture and purity of flavor. In 2015, the Cuttings Wharf Chardonnay also underwent a 100% malolactic fermentation, which converts tangy malic acid to creamier lactic acid. Post-fermentation, the wine aged in French oak barrels, 33% new, for 15 months *sur lie* (on the yeast lees) with periodic stirring of the lees to enhance texture, richness and complexity.

Tasting Notes

Creamy sweet apple, citrus and stone fruit aromas, augmented by subtle oak, yeast and mineral tones, introduce this wine's brilliant, full-bodied flavors of ripe golden apple, white peach, melon and citrus. Rich, concentrated and beautifully structured on the palate, with a deep core of pure, expressive fruit, this classic single-vineyard, cool-climate Napa Valley chardonnay culminates in a long, vibrant finish featuring bright acidity, a touch of oak spice and a refreshing minerality. Delicious now, it will develop beautifully in bottle for another 3-5 years.

Grape variety: 100% Chardonnay

Vineyards: Napa Valley, Cuttings Wharf Vineyard

Harvest dates: August 14th –19th, 2015

Fermentation: 92% barrel, 8% concrete, 100% malolactic

Barrel aging: 15 months *sur lie* in French oak barrels,
33% new, with periodic stirring of the yeast lees

Alcohol: 14.5%

Total acidity: 0.69 g/100ml

pH: 3.42

Bottled: January, 2017

Winemaker: Julianne Laks