

Cakebread Cellars



2015 Chardonnay Reserve Carneros Napa Valley

Vineyards

The grapes for our Chardonnay Reserve come exclusively from our four estate vineyards in the Carneros district of southern Napa Valley. These cool-climate sites provide ideal conditions for cultivating world-class chardonnay. Our nine superior clones of the variety further enhance the quality and complexity of this wine, with each contributing desirable traits to the final blend. By fermenting and barrel-aging each clonal selection separately – using French oak barrels tailored to the particular character of each lot – and blending only the very best lots – we’re able to craft a rich, luxurious chardonnay boasting layers of captivating aromas and flavors.

Vintage 2015

The 2015 Napa Valley vintage gave us a short crop of small-clustered grapes boasting deeply concentrated flavors. A warm, dry winter fostered early bud-break, and consistently mild summer weather, with a few late-season heat spikes, led to our earliest harvest ever. (Since Cakebread Cellars has been around since 1973, that’s saying something.) The light crop yielded small chardonnay berries bursting with bright, intense varietal flavors. We harvested the fruit between August 13th and September 25th with an ideal balance of sugars and acidity.

Winemaking

To maximize freshness and varietal intensity, we night-harvest and whole-cluster-press our hand-picked Carneros estate grapes, then instigate fermentation by inoculating the majority of the juice with cultured yeast strains that accentuate the chardonnay variety’s vibrant fruit tones. In most years, we also ferment certain lots of fruit (10% of the blend in 2015) using native yeast from the vineyard to capture the singular character of our Carneros *terroir*. In 2015, 100% of the juice fermented in French oak barrels, 35% new, while 38% of the wine underwent a secondary, malolactic fermentation to foster a rich, creamy mouthfeel. Our 2015 Chardonnay Reserve aged in barrel on its primary yeast lees for 15 months, with periodic stirring of the lees to optimize the wine’s complex aromas, rich texture and lush, concentrated flavors.

Tasting Notes

Seductive, slightly floral aromas of creamy golden apple and honeydew melon, with complementary scents of crème brulee, yeast and mineral, preface a lush, full-bodied palate offering intense and expansive melon, peach and apple flavors accentuated by fresh, perfectly balanced acidity. The wine’s long, elegant and focused finish showcases bright, apple-y flavors with hints of citrus, mineral and oak spice. This delicious and complex Carneros Napa Valley chardonnay is eminently enjoyable now, but it will gain further complexity with another 5-7 years aging.

Grape variety: 100% chardonnay

Vineyards: 100% estate Carneros, Napa Valley

Harvest dates: August 13th – September 25th, 2015

Fermentation: 100% barrel, 38% malolactic

Barrel aging: 15 months *sur lie* in 35% new French oak barrels with periodic stirring of the yeast lees

Alcohol: 14.3%

Total acidity: 0.69 g/100 ml

pH: 3.36

Bottled: January, 2017

Winemaker: Julianne Laks