

Cakebread Cellars



2009 Merlot Napa Valley

Vineyards

In 2009, 93% of the grapes for our Napa Valley Merlot came from the northern precincts of the valley, while 7% issued from the cooler Carneros district at its southern tip. Blending fruit from these disparate microclimates allows us to create a rich, ripe Merlot balanced by crisp acidity and bright fruit tones.

Vintage 2009

In 2009, plentiful spring rains in Northern California deferred the need for early irrigation, resulting in small berries with deeply concentrated flavors. Summer was consistently cool, which allowed for slow, steady ripening and the parallel development of grape sugars and flavors, fostering maturity at moderate sugar levels and resulting in superbly balanced wines. We harvested the grapes for our 2009 Merlot between August 31st and October 12th with an ideal balance of ripe fruit flavors and crisp balancing acidity.

Winemaking

To craft our Merlot, we separately harvest, de-stem and crush each lot of grapes, cold-soaking the must for 3-4 days to extract maximum color and supple tannins from the skins. We ferment the various lots in a mix of small closed and open-top stainless steel tanks, tasting the fermenting wines daily and adjusting fermentation temperatures to maximize the extraction of color, flavor and tannin. As with all our red wines, we pay particular attention to selecting the perfect barrels in which to age each lot of wine, fine-tuning the selection based on frequent tasting. The 2009 vintage spent six months aging in 38% new French Bordeaux barrels prior to blending. The blended wine then spent an additional 12 months in barrel before bottling, adding another layer of elegance and complexity to its rich, intense flavors.

Tasting Notes

Our 2009 Merlot displays ripe black cherry and plum compote aromas complemented by enticing tea-leaf, toasted vanilla and woody scents. Plush, rich and juicy on the palate, its densely concentrated black cherry, dark plum and pomegranate flavors are supported by fine-grained tannins and a long, sumptuous finish graced by savory spice and mocha tones. An irresistibly lush Merlot of great depth, length and suppleness, it drinks deliciously now, yet will develop further complexity with another 2-3 years of bottle age.

Composition: 95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon

Vineyards: Napa Valley

Harvest dates: August 31 – October 12, 2009

Fermentation: 100% stainless steel

Barrel aging: 18 months in French oak barrels, 38% new

Alcohol: 14.1%

Total acidity: 0.68 g/100 ml

pH: 3.55

Bottled: April, 2011

Winemaker: Julianne Laks