

Cakebread Cellars



2009 Syrah Napa Valley

Vineyards

Two-thirds of the grapes for our limited-production 2009 Syrah came from our Milton Road and Suscol Springs estate vineyards in southern Napa Valley, with the balance from two other fine, cool-climate Napa Valley vineyards. Collectively, these sites are planted to eight different, high-quality clones of Syrah, four of which originated in France's northern Rhône Valley. Like the northern Rhône, our Southern Napa vineyards feature a cool, windy climate that fosters the rich, earthy, spicy flavors for which Syrah has long been acclaimed.

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 lower sugar levels and superbly balanced wines. We harvested our Syrah grapes late in the season on October 28th with a beautiful balance of rich, ripe fruit flavors and vibrant acidity.

Winemaking

We harvest each of our Syrah clonal selections separately and ferment them in small open-top fermenters. Prior to fermentation, we cold-soak the must (unfermented juice and skins) for four to six days to maximize color extraction and soften tannins. After fermentation begins, we daily punch down the cap of skins at the top of the fermenting tank to thoroughly macerate the skins and juice and extract maximum color and flavor, closely monitoring tannin extraction to ensure we drain the wine from tank at exactly the right moment for optimal fruit-tannin balance. The wines are then transferred to French oak barrels (40% new in 2009), where they age for eight months before blending. The 2009 Syrah spent an additional six months aging in barrel prior to bottling in February, 2011.

Tasting Notes

Our 2009 Syrah boasts a terrific dark ruby/purple color and lovely, seductive aromas of violets, sweet black cherry and roasted earth. On the palate, concentrated blackberry, dark plum and currant flavors, with notes of sweet oak and pepper spice, are balanced by ripe, supple tannins, creating a round, luxurious mouthfeel. The wine culminates in an extremely long, savory finish featuring luscious black fruit, toasted oak and chocolate flavors that leave a deeply lasting impression. While this sumptuous Syrah provides delicious drinking now, its lavish fruit and fine structure ensure it will age beautifully in bottle for another 5-7 years.

Grape variety: 100% Syrah

Vineyards: 100% Napa Valley

Harvest dates: October 28, 2009

Fermentation: small open-top tanks

Barrel aging: 14 months in 40% new French oak

Alcohol: 14.1%

Total acidity: 0.70 g/100 ml

pH: 3.82

Bottled: February, 2011

Winemaker: Julianne Laks