

Cakebread Cellars



2009 Zinfandel Red Hills Lake County

Vineyards

We craft this enormously appealing Zinfandel from grapes grown at a 2,100-foot-plus elevation in the acclaimed Red Hills appellation of Lake County. Located at the foot of Mt. Konocti, an ancient volcano, this prime site boasts a perfect southwestern exposure and vines rooted in well-drained, mineral-rich, red volcanic soils. Its hot sunny days, windy afternoons and nights chilled by breezes from nearby Clear Lake provide ideal conditions for three distinguished clones of Zinfandel, including Primitivo and heritage selections from Amador and Mendocino counties.

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 peak maturity at lower sugar levels and superbly balanced wines. We harvested our Lake County Zinfandel grapes on September 22nd with a beautiful balance of rich, ripe fruit flavors and bright acidity.

Winemaking

Night-harvesting our Lake County Zinfandel fruit in the cold early-morning hours maximized its freshness, purity and flavor concentration. We harvested, fermented and aged each of our three clonal selections of Zinfandel separately to maximize their distinctive personalities and ensure an extra dimension of complexity in the wine. After a short, warm fermentation in stainless steel tanks to fully extract color, flavor and tannins, the wines remained on their skins for several more weeks to further enhance color and flavor extraction while softening tannins. After pressing the wines off the skins, we transferred them to French oak barrels, 50% new, where they aged for seven months before the final blend was assembled the following spring. The finished wine then aged another eight months in barrel before bottling in February, 2011.

Tasting Notes

Reflecting the unique character of the Red Hills appellation, our 2009 Zinfandel explodes with layers of ripe boysenberry, black raspberry, blackberry and plum compote aromas coupled with loamy earth, sweet vanilla and toasted oak scents. Rich, round and concentrated on the palate, it delivers a beautifully structured and focused core of super-rich brambleberry fruit balanced by seamlessly integrated tannins, vibrant fresh black cherry acidity, and a long, savory finish echoing the vineyard's distinctive clay mineral character. Delicious now with hearty repasts, this luscious Zinfandel will further unfold its charms with another 3-5 years' aging.

Grape variety: 100% Zinfandel

Vineyards: 100% Lake County, Red Hills appellation

Harvest dates: September 22, 2009

Fermentation: stainless steel tanks

Barrel aging: 15 months in 50% new French oak barrels

Alcohol: 14.1%

Total acidity: 0.71 g/100 ml

pH: 3.80

Bottled: February, 2011

Winemaker: Julianne Laks