

Cakebread Cellars



2011 Zinfandel Red Hills Lake County

Vineyards

This is our tenth vintage of zinfandel from a magnificent, high-elevation vineyard in the esteemed Red Hills appellation of Lake County, due north of Napa Valley. Located at the foot of Mt. Konocti, an ancient volcano, the vineyard tops 2,000 feet in elevation and boasts a perfect southwestern exposure, excellent air circulation, and well-drained, mineral-rich, red volcanic soils. Its hot, sunny days, windy afternoons, and nights chilled by breezes from nearby Clear Lake ensure full, even ripening of the three distinguished clones of zinfandel we harvest from the site: primitivo and heritage selections from Amador and Mendocino counties.

Vintage 2011

2011 was an unusual vintage in California. Wet winter and spring weather extended into mid-June, delaying budbreak, bloom and fruit set and setting the stage for a cool summer growing season that culminated in a prolonged, occasionally rainy, harvest. Our Lake County zinfandel grapes were less affected by the wet conditions because high-elevation vineyards drain more easily, and Red Hills is a warm, breezy region that dries out quickly. The cooler growing season actually was a blessing, as it allowed our grapes to ripen slowly and evenly, developing deeply concentrated flavors.

Winemaking

We night-harvest our Lake County zinfandel grapes to preserve their freshness, fruit purity and varietal expressiveness, then ferment and age each of our three clonal selections separately to maximize their distinctive personalities and ensure an extra dimension of complexity in the wine. After warm fermentations in both small and large stainless steel tanks to fully extract color, flavor and tannins – with each fermentation tailored to the character of the individual lot – the wines remain on their skins for several more weeks to further enhance color and flavor while softening tannins. In 2011, after pressing the wines off the skins, we transferred them to French oak barrels, 36% new, where they aged seven months before the final blend was assembled the following spring and aged eight months in barrel prior to bottling in February, 2013.

Tasting Notes

Our 2011 Lake County zinfandel exudes fresh, ripe, generous aromas of jammy black cherry, red raspberry and plum fruit, complemented nicely by a whiff of toasted herbs. Rich and supple on the palate, its deeply concentrated cherry, black raspberry and red plum flavors extend into a long, savory finish mingling juicy cherry, briary spice and refreshing mineral tones. Beautifully structured with fine, well-integrated tannins and fresh acidity, this delicious mountain-grown zinfandel drinks beautifully now, but will reward another 3-5 years of cellaring.

Grape variety: 92% Zinfandel, 3% each Petite Sirah, Syrah, Petit Verdot
Vineyards: 100% Lake County, Red Hills appellation
Harvest dates: September 27 – October 3, 2011
Fermentation: stainless steel tanks
Barrel aging: 15 months in French oak barrels, 36% new

Alcohol: 14.7%
Total acidity: 0.62 g/100 ml
pH: 3.72
Bottled: February, 2013
Winemaker: Julianne Laks