

Cakebread Cellars



2011 Syrah Napa Valley

Vineyards

Seventy percent of the grapes for our 2011 Syrah came from our Suscol Springs estate vineyard in southern Napa Valley, with the balance from two other cool-climate Napa Valley vineyards. Collectively, these sites are planted to six high-quality clones of Syrah, several originating in France's northern Rhône Valley. Like many northern Rhône vineyards, Suscol Springs is a hilly, rocky, well-drained site with a cool, windy climate, conditions fostering the rich, earthy, spicy flavors for which Syrah is renowned. In 2011, we included small amounts of Petit Verdot, Petit Syrah and Grenache in the blend to optimize our Syrah's lush fruit character.

Vintage 2011

In 2011, ample winter and spring rainfall extending into mid-June delayed vine development by several weeks, setting the stage for a prolonged grape harvest. Cool summer weather fostered slow, even ripening of our southern Napa Valley Syrah grapes, which achieved optimal flavor concentration at lower-than-normal sugar levels. The fruit was harvested between October 10th and October 21st with an ideal balance of sugar and acidity.

Winemaking

We harvest each of our Syrah clones separately and ferment them in small open-top fermenters. Prior to fermentation, we cold soak the must for four to six days to maximize color extraction and soften tannins. During fermentation, we daily punch down the cap of skins at the top of the fermenting tanks to thoroughly macerate the skins and juice for optimal color and flavor, while closely monitoring tannin levels. Once fermentation completes, we drain the free-run juice by gravity and transfer the wines to French oak barrels (47% new in 2011). Our 2011 Syrah spent a total of 14 months aging in barrel prior to bottling in December, 2012.

Tasting Notes

Our dark ruby, nearly opaque 2011 Syrah offers fascinatingly complex aromas of roasted earth and toasted blackberry, dark plum and cassis aromas, complemented by fragrant notes of violets, sage, white pepper and milk chocolate. Rich and dense on the palate with round, supple tannins, its concentrated black cherry, wild berry, plum, blackcurrant and baking spice flavors culminate in a long, savory finish with rich boysenberry and plum tones. Although this sumptuous Syrah is delicious now with hearty meals, it will develop beautifully in bottle for another 5-7 years.

Grape varieties: 82% Syrah, 10% Petit Verdot, 4% each Grenache and Petit Syrah

Vineyards: 100% Napa Valley, 70% estate

Harvest dates: October 10-21, 2011

Fermentation: small open-top tanks

Barrel aging: 14 months in 47% new French oak

Alcohol: 13.8%

Total acidity: 0.59 g/100 ml

pH: 3.70

Bottled: December, 2012

Winemaker: Julianne Laks