

Cakebread Cellars



1998 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Vintage 1998

Cakebread Cellars' 1998 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is yet another classic vintage Cabernet of the Nineties. The vintage itself was challenging, to say the least. *El Niño*-generated weather patterns kept Napa Valley vineyards unusually cool and wet for most of the growing season, until two separate hot spells hit in mid-July and August. However, overall, the 1998 Vintage was the coolest one since 1994. While crop levels were down 20% from 1997's bountiful yields, quality was kept high due to the prevalent cool temperatures plus "The October Miracle" of an "Indian summer."

Vineyards

The fruit for the 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon came primarily from here in Rutherford and neighboring Oakville appellations, with smaller lots from Stags' Leap, Carneros and St. Helena growing areas. To add additional characters of dark fruit and earthiness we blended in 15% Merlot. A small amount of Cabernet Franc (7%), on the other hand, lent structure plus a wonderful berry-like flavor.

Winemaking

The determining factor in the Cakebread style of winemaking is taste, whether it is to decide when grapes are wholly mature to pick or when to "press-out" an individual lot of fermented Cabernet Sauvignon. In making this 1998 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, as is our practice, we fermented each vineyard lot separately. Then, we put half in new small French oak barrels and half in one and two-year old barrels for approximately six months. Throughout this initial aging process, we continually taste-analyze the various individual lots so as to put together a final blend. Once we assemble a final blend, it goes into the same French oak barrels to age for an additional year before being bottled.

Tasting Notes

This 1998 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon has a clear, dark garnet color. Its spicy, cedar-like scents together with a background aroma of cassis are invitingly rich and complex. On the palate, the texture is rich and smooth with flavors reminiscent of cassis with a hint of chocolate. The overall taste-impression of this wine is one of rich black fruit in a delicious balance.

Grape variety: 78% Cabernet Sauvignon;
15% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc
Vineyards: 100% Napa Valley
Harvest dates: 10-19 through 10-28-98
Fermentation: Stainless Steel
Barrel aging: 18½ months in French oak,
50% in new, balance in one & two-year old barrels.

Alcohol content: 14.18 %
Total acidity: 0.60 g/100ml
pH: 3.68
Residual sugar: 0.07g/100ml
Bottled: 5-8 through 5-25-00
Winemaker: Bruce Cakebread