Cakebread Cellars



2005 Merlot Napa Valley

Vineyards

Three-quarters of the grapes for our 2005 Merlot came from vineyards in the Oakville, Rutherford and Calistoga districts of upper Napa Valley, with the balance from the cooler Carneros district in the southern tip of the valley. The up-valley fruit contributes ripe berry, plum and cocoa flavors, while the Carneros fruit adds a bright black cherry and tea-leaf character, with vibrant acidity.

Vintage 2005

In 2005, a warm late winter spurred early bud break, but cool, wet, spring weather set back vine development. Atypically cool temperatures continued throughout the summer, which slowed ripening and prolonged the growing season. Fortunately, warm, sunny weather in September and October brought the harvest to fruition in fine fashion. Due to the early start to the season and its late conclusion, the grapes for our 2005 Merlot, which includes 22% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Syrah, enjoyed a long hang time on the vines, developing concentrated flavors at moderate sugar levels. The fruit was harvested between October 4th and October 31st.

Winemaking

After de-stemming and crushing the grapes, we cold-soaked the must (unfermented juice and skins) to enhance color and flavor extraction. Once fermentation began, we used a technique called rack-and-return, in which fermenting juice from one tank is drained and transferred to a second tank, leaving the 'cap' of skins in the first tank to fall to the bottom. The juice is then returned to the original tank, re-macerating the skins and maximizing color and flavor extraction while softening tannins. Once fermentation completed, the free run wine was drained off the skins and transferred to French oak barrels, 45% new, where they aged five months before blending. The wine then aged 13 more months in barrel before bottling in April, 2007.

Tasting Notes

Our 2005 Merlot offers a constellation of bright fruit aromas keyed on fresh black cherry, blueberry and plum, with fragrant scents of rose petal, tea-leaf, tobacco and cocoa adding interest and complexity. On the compact, supple palate, vibrant cherry, blackberry and cassis flavors are enlivened by a zesty black-tea spiciness that segues into a long, cocoa-tinged finish. Delicious now, this rich, firmly structured Merlot will soften and develop further nuance with 2-3 years' additional bottle age.

Composition: 76% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Sauvignon,

2% Syrah

Vineyards: 100% Napa Valley Harvest dates: October 4-31, 2005

Fermentation: 100% stainless steel, with rack-and-return **Barrel aging**: 18 months in French oak barrels, 45% new

Alcohol: 14.3%

Total acidity: 0.63 g/100 ml

pH: 3.71

Bottled: April, 2007 **Winemaker:** Julianne Laks