

Cakebread Cellars



2015 Syrah Suscol Springs Vineyard Napa Valley

Vineyards

Considered one of the noble grape varieties originating from France's northern Rhône Valley, syrah has found an ideal home in Napa Valley, more specifically in our family-owned Suscol Springs Vineyard in the southeastern corner of the valley. The hilly, cool and windy location offers rocky, well-drained soils and southern and western sun exposures, perfect for producing this small production, estate-grown wine. Given its idyllic setting, we grow five top-flight clones of syrah. This clonal variation, coupled with the premier terroir, enables us to craft a vibrant, complex syrah boasting varietally distinctive aromas and flavors, as well as bright acidity.

Vintage 2015

After abundant harvests from 2012 through 2014, the 2015 growing season experienced more weather extremities that led to a small, yet outstanding, vintage. 2015 was our earliest harvest ever in the 40+ year of Cakebread Cellars history. A warm, dry winter fostered early bud-break, though a cold spell during fruit set limited cluster sizes. A warm summer and late-season heat spikes ensured beautiful ripening. While lighter in crop size, the small syrah berries were full in flavor intensity. We hand harvested the fruit at night between September 14th and 23rd for a perfect balance of ripeness and acidity.

Winemaking

Our 2015 Syrah is crafted from four (174, Shaw, Tablas Creek and Syrah Noir) of our five clones of the variety. Each clonal lot was harvested and fermented separately to preserve its unique intricacies. Prior to fermentation, we cold soaked the lots for four to six days to maximize color extraction and soften tannins. During fermentation in small, open-top fermenters, we daily punched 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 also closely monitoring tannin levels. Once fermentation completed, we drained the free-run juice by gravity and transferred the wines to French oak barrels (50% new in 2015) where they aged before blending. Overall, the wine spent 15 months in French oak prior to bottling.

Tasting Notes

Generous, deeply concentrated aromas of blackberry, boysenberry and mocha, with hints of violets, licorice root and roasted earth, introduce bright, rich flavors of blackberry, boysenberry, blueberry and black cherry boosted by lively acidity and well-structured tannins. The wine's lingering finish showcases fresh black plum, cherry, licorice and savory herb tones. Impressive now, this youthful syrah will age gracefully in bottle for another 5-7 years.

Grape varieties: 98% syrah, 2% grenache

Vineyards: 100% estate Napa Valley, Suscol Springs Vynd.

Harvest dates: September 14th – 23rd, 2015

Fermentation: small open-top tanks

Barrel aging: 15 months in 50% new French oak

Alcohol: 14.5%

Total acidity: 0.68 g/100 ml

pH: 3.53

Bottled: December 12, 2016

Winemaker: Julianne Laks