

Cakebread Cellars



2008 Merlot Napa Valley

Vineyards

In 2008, 85% of the grapes for our Napa Valley Merlot came from the warmer northern precincts of the valley, while 15% came from the cooler Carneros district at the southern tip of the valley. This blend enabled us to create a rich, ripe Merlot balanced by the crisp acidity and bright fruit tones typical of Carneros region Merlot.

Vintage 2008

The 2008 growing season featured heavy winter rains, drought conditions in early spring and severe frosts in March and April. Coupled with disadvantageous weather during bloom and stress-inducing heat during grape set, these conditions significantly reduced the size of the crop throughout Napa Valley, greatly concentrating flavors. Clear, mild summer weather, with warm days and cool nights, fully matured our Merlot grapes, which were harvested between August 22nd and September 3rd.

Winemaking

After the grapes were harvested and delivered to the winery, each vineyard lot was de-stemmed, crushed and cold-soaked for 3-4 days to extract maximum color and supple tannins from the skins. The must fermented in closed-top stainless steel tanks, the size of which was tailored to the attributes of each lot, with daily pumpovers to achieve optimal color, flavor and tannin extraction. Particular attention to the selection of barrels with moderate oak toast levels respects the elegance and delicate fruit structure of Merlot, adding a subtle spice and perfume. This vintage's grapes spent 6 to 8 months aging in 43% new French Bordeaux barrels prior to blending. The blended wine then spent an additional 12-14 months in barrel prior to bottling, which added another layer of elegance and complexity to its lush, mouthfilling fruit flavors.

Tasting Notes

Bright, sweet black cherry and plum compote aromas, complemented by tea-leaf spice and oak vanillin scents, introduce our lovely 2008 Napa Valley Merlot, which follows through on the smooth, round palate with succulent, mouthfilling, ripe cherry and plum flavors. Displaying a deep, expansive mid-palate, fine underlying structure and a lingering, zesty finish enlivened by black tea spice tones, this mellifluous Merlot is delicious for current drinking, but will develop further complexity with another 2-3 years of bottle age.

Composition: 91% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon,
4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Malbec

Vineyards: Napa Valley

Harvest dates: August 22 – September 3, 2008

Fermentation: 100% stainless steel

Barrel aging: 18 months in French oak barrels, 43% new

Alcohol: 14.2%

Total acidity: 0.66 g/100 ml

pH: 3.60

Bottled: April, 2010

Winemaker: Julianne Laks