

Cakebread Cellars



2012 Chardonnay Napa Valley

Vineyards

Our Napa Valley Chardonnay is a blend of grapes from top vineyards throughout the southern end of the valley, with the preponderance of the fruit coming from the cool Carneros region. Deeply influenced by fog and cool breezes emanating from nearby San Pablo Bay, Carneros enjoys a long growing season that ripens its fruit fully while retaining the bright acidity that gives our Chardonnay its freshness and vitality. We complement our Carneros grapes with fruit from warmer up-valley sites that produce even riper, fuller Chardonnays. This allows us to craft a rich, elegantly structured wine that drinks beautifully on release, but ages well in bottle. To enhance its freshness and protect our vineyard workers from harvest-time heat, we night-harvest our Chardonnay grapes by hand, ensuring they reach the winery in pristine condition.

Vintage 2012

The 2012 vintage was one of the finest in recent memory. Consistently mild summer weather free of rain and significant heat spikes produced a healthy crop of intensely flavorful fruit. These ideal conditions allowed us to harvest our Napa Valley Chardonnay grapes at precisely the right moment, capturing a perfect balance of ripe, concentrated fruit flavors and lively acidity. As a result, our 2012 Napa Valley Chardonnay ranks among Cakebread Cellars' best.

Winemaking

Our strategy for producing world-class Chardonnay begins with night harvesting, which ensures that our grapes are picked cold and retain their fruit purity and bright natural acidity. Immediately upon arriving at the winery, the fruit is whole-cluster-pressed – further preserving freshness and purity – and the juice is transferred to a mix of French oak barrels and stainless steel tanks for fermentation. In 2012, 88% of the juice was fermented in barrel, while 12% became wine in tank. After primary fermentation completed, 16% of the wine was put through a secondary, malolactic fermentation to enhance richness and mouthfeel. One hundred percent of the wine aged *sur lie* (on the yeast lees) in French oak barrels, 20% new, for eight months to foster greater roundness and complexity, with periodic stirring of the lees adding an appealing creamy, yeasty tone to the wine's lavish fruit.

Tasting Notes

Our 2012 Napa Valley Chardonnay offers delightfully fragrant, slightly yeasty aromas of ripe pear, apple and guava fruit complemented by hints of honeysuckle, mineral and toasted oak. It likewise hits the mark on the palate, delivering sensationally concentrated pear, spiced apple and melon flavors that culminate in a long finish lifted by zesty spice and mineral tones. Bold and beautifully balanced, with great depth and breadth of flavor, our 2012 Chardonnay is a delicious expression of a picture-perfect vintage. It will continue to please over the next 3-5 years.

Grape variety: 100% Chardonnay

Vineyards: Napa Valley

Harvest dates: September 5 – October 3, 2012

Fermentation: 88% barrel, 12% tank, 16% malolactic

Barrel aging: 8 months *sur lie* in French oak barrels, 20% new, with periodic stirring of the lees

Alcohol: 14.2%

Total acidity: 0.73 g/100ml

pH: 3.45

Bottled: June, 2013

Winemaker: Julianne Laks