

Cakebread Cellars



2008 Syrah Carneros Napa Valley

Vineyards

The majority of the grapes for our Carneros Napa Valley Syrah come from our Milton Road estate, the southernmost vineyard in Napa's cool-climate Carneros District, which borders San Pablo Bay and benefits from its marine influence. Milton Road is planted to five distinctive clones of Syrah, including three originating in France's northern Rhône Valley. Like the northern Rhône, Carneros features a cool, windy climate that fosters the rich, earthy, spicy flavors for which Syrah is prized.

Vintage 2008

The tumultuous 2008 growing season began with heavy winter rains, segued into drought conditions in early spring and erupted into the worst frost season in over 35 years in March and April. Coupled with disadvantageous weather during bloom in May and stress-inducing heat during grape set in June, these conditions significantly reduced the size of the crop throughout Napa Valley. Fortunately, clear, mild summer weather, with warm days and cool nights, brought our Carneros Syrah grapes to full maturity between September 26th and October 10th.

Winemaking

We harvest each of our five Syrah clonal selections separately and ferment them in small open-top fermenters. Prior to fermentation, we cold-soak the must (unfermented juice and skins) for four to six days to maximize color extraction and soften tannins. After fermentation begins, we daily punch down the cap of skins at the top of the fermenting tank to thoroughly macerate the skins and juice and extract maximum color and flavor. Once the ideal level of extraction and tannin balance has been achieved, the free-run is drained from tank and transferred to French oak barrels, where the wines age eight months prior to blending. The 2008 Syrah spent an additional six months aging in barrel prior to bottling in December, 2009.

Tasting Notes

Our 2008 Carneros Syrah displays a dark, nearly opaque color and wonderfully expressive varietal aromas of ripe blackberry, olallieberry and sweet black cherry fruit mingled with strong roasted coffee bean scents. On the dense, weighty palate, the wine's immensely rich blackberry cobbler, cassis and licorice spice flavors offer tremendous length and intensity, bolstered by sturdy, supple tannins and savory toasted oak tones. While this remarkably lush, sumptuous Syrah is delicious now, especially with grilled and barbecued meats and hearty stews, its deep, concentrated fruit and fine underlying structure ensure it will age well for another 5-7 years.

Grape variety: 100% Syrah
Vineyards: 100% Carneros District
Harvest dates: September 26 – October 10, 2008
Fermentation: small open-top tanks
Barrel aging: 14 months in 44% new French oak

Alcohol: 14.6%
Total acidity: 0.62 g/100 ml
pH: 3.81
Bottled: December, 2009
Winemaker: Julianne Laks