

Cakebread Cellars



2012 Vaca Red Wine Blend, Napa Valley

Our new Vaca Red, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot from three of our Napa Valley estate vineyards, demonstrates how a fine wine can be far greater than the sum of its parts. From south to north, the three vineyards in question – Suscol Springs (45% of the blend), Doggwood (35%) and Dancing Bear (20%) – span the western slopes of the Vaca Mountains, which form the eastern boundary of Napa Valley. All are high-elevation sites with rocky, volcanic soils that foster grapes with deep, concentrated flavors.

Vineyards

Our Suscol Springs Ranch east of the town of Napa is the coolest and most southerly of our three Vaca Range vineyards, with its vines planted amidst rocky outcrops overlooking the valley floor. Doggwood Vineyard is located further north above Conn Dam near Napa's eastern ridgeline in a warm, bowl-like valley boasting multiple sun exposures. Dancing Bear, our northernmost Vaca Range vineyard, is planted on the steep slopes of Howell Mountain, far above the fog line, at elevations exceeding 1,600 feet. With a near-360 degree exposure and dry soils that stress the vines, Dancing Bear yields fruit with a distinctive mountain character.

Vintage 2012

2012 was a truly spectacular growing season in Napa Valley, with a warm, dry spring fostering early budbreak and trouble-free flowering and grape set. Consistently mild summer weather free of rain or unwelcome heat spikes allowed us to harvest our Vaca Range grapes at peak maturity with a perfect balance of deeply concentrated fruit flavors, bright acidity and ripe, supple tannins.

Winemaking

Our 2012 Vaca Red is a blend of a half-dozen lots of wine from our three Vaca Range vineyards. Each lot was separately harvested, cold-soaked to enhance color, flavor and tannin extraction, tank-fermented and barrel-aged prior to blending. Tank size, yeast strain, fermentation temperature and barrel type were specifically tailored to the fruit character of each lot. Our 2012 Vaca Red spent a total of 21 months aging in French oak barrels, 57% new, prior to bottling in August, 2014.

Tasting Notes

The 2012 Vaca Red displays a delightfully perfumed nose of dense ripe cherry, boysenberry, and blackcurrant fruit accented by subtle floral, loam and spice scents. Wonderfully concentrated on the palate with a deep, firm core of black and red cherry, pomegranate, blackberry, cassis and black fig flavors, it boasts a lovely spice-box note on the very long, rich finish. This dazzling three-vineyard blend is absolutely delicious now, but will handsomely repay 8-10 years of cellaring.

Composition: 69% cabernet sauvignon, 31% merlot

Vineyards: Napa Valley: 45% Suscol Springs,
35% Doggwood, 20% Dancing Bear

Harvest dates: October 2-21, 2012

Fermentation: 100% in stainless steel tanks

Barrel aging: 21 months in French oak barrels, 57% new

Alcohol: 14.6

Total acidity: 0.63

pH: 3.7

Bottled: August 1, 2014

Winemaker: Julianne Laks