

Cakebread Cellars



2015 Merlot Napa Valley

Vineyards

Nearly 80% of the grapes for our 2015 Napa Valley Merlot came from three of our estate vineyards, with the majority from our Suscol Springs Ranch in southeastern Napa Valley and smaller percentages from Maple Lane near Calistoga in the northern end of the valley and Howell Mountain to the east. This diversity of sites allowed us to craft a sumptuous, deeply flavorful merlot with rich fruit flavors balanced by bright acidity and silky tannins.

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.

Winemaking

In 2015, we fermented six separate lots of merlot in a mix of small closed and open-top stainless-steel tanks, pumping the fermenting juice over the 'cap' of skins and other solids that form at the top of the tank to fully extract color, flavor and tannin from the skins. After fermentation completed, we transferred the new wines to carefully selected French oak barrels, 44% new, where they aged for eight months before being blended in June, 2016. After blending, the wine spent an additional nine months in barrel prior to bottling on March 22, 2017.

Tasting Notes

Deep, lovely aromas of ripe black cherry and blackcurrant fruit are complemented by light floral notes in the nose of this plush, supple merlot. Rich, concentrated flavors of ripe blackberry, black plum and blackcurrant fill the lush palate, framed by fine-grained tannins, leading to a long finish showcasing bright black cherry, berry and mineral tones. Delicious now, this classic Napa Valley merlot will gain further complexity with another 5-7 years' bottle age.

Composition: 95% merlot, 5% cabernet franc

Vineyards: Napa Valley, 79% estate

Harvest dates: August 21st – September 20th, 2015

Fermentation: 100% stainless steel tanks

Barrel aging: 17 months in French oak barrels, 44% new

Alcohol: 14.9%

Total acidity: 0.68grams/100 ml

pH: 3.47

Bottled: March 22, 2017

Winemaker: Julianne Laks