

Cakebread Cellars



2001 Cakebread Cellars Vine Hill Cabernet Sauvignon

Vineyards

The grapes for our acclaimed Vine Hill Cabernet Sauvignon, which is produced in very limited quantities, come from the Vine Hill Vineyard, situated along Oakville's gently sloping western benchlands. The vineyard has long been owned by grape grower Bob Phillips and his family, and we've been fortunate to work with them for over two decades, using Vine Hill grapes in our Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon since 1995. In 1997, we decided the fruit from this exceptional vineyard was so special it merited its own bottling, so we began producing a Vine Hill Cabernet Sauvignon from two special blocks of Bob's vines. Vine Hill has since become one of Cakebread Cellars' most sought-after wines. In 2001, the fruit was harvested between October 4th and October 8th in ideal condition.

Vintage 2001

The 2001 vintage was a bit of a roller coaster ride. A warm March led to early bud break, followed by April frosts that reduced the crop in some north coast regions. May and June were warm, ensuring a healthy bloom and grape set, but the weather turned cool in July. A brief mid-August heat spell reignited the ripening process, which slowed again with cool weather in late August and early September. Fortunately, a classic California Indian summer ensued, bringing the harvest to fruition in October with a moderate crop of fully ripened, small-berried Cabernet Sauvignon grapes blessed with ripe, intense flavors.

Winemaking

After the fruit was crushed, the juice and skins were moved to tank and allowed to cold soak for 48 hours before fermentation was initiated, a procedure designed to extract color and flavor. Once fermentation got underway, the juice was drained from one tank to another, allowing the skins in the first tank to fall to the bottom, only to be thoroughly re-macerated once the juice was splashed back into the tank. Known as rack-and-return, this procedure helps extract more color and flavor and also converts short-chain (harsh) tannins to long-chain (suppler) tannins. After an extended, four-week maceration, the wine was pressed and then transferred to French oak barrels, 75% new, where it spent 23 months aging before being bottled in August 2003.

Tasting Notes

Our 2001 Vine Hill Cabernet Sauvignon displays the deep, rich fruit and superb tannin structure characteristic of this magnificent Oakville vineyard. The aroma is classic Napa Valley: ripe, dusty blackberry, black plum and black currant fruit laced with a hint of briary spice and a whiff of sweet, toasty oak. At first taste, the wine reveals a big, thick, harmonious texture followed by waves of deep, concentrated black fruit that expand on the palate and take on a spicy, licorice-like tone in the remarkably lengthy finish. Truly "hedonistic," but with a splendid balance of supple tannins and bright underlying acidity, this immensely generous Cabernet is hard to resist now, but will develop and provide pleasure for another decade.

Grape varieties: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Vineyards: 100% Vine Hill Vineyard, Oakville
Harvest dates: October 4th - 8th
Fermentation: 100% in stainless steel
Barrel aging: 23 months in French oak,
75% new

Alcohol: 14.8%
Total acidity: 0.68 g/100 ml
pH: 3.77
Bottled: August 2003
Released: March 2004
Winemaker: Julianne Laks