

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2021 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, NAPA VALLEY

Established in the famed Stags Leap District in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses 160 acres throughout Napa Valley. Founder Cliff Lede, Director of Vineyard Operations Allison Wilson, and Director of Winemaking Christopher Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled team, making the most of these exceptional estate vineyards.

Vintage

The 2021 growing season was beset by a very dry winter. The valley received only half of the average rainfall. Because of the winter drought, our experienced vineyard crew began irrigation before bud break in the rockiest soils and set about crafting canopies that would protect and ripen the fruit to perfection. Although dry, the mild weather during April's budbreak helped establish healthy shoot and leaf growth throughout May into June. Mid-June saw some of the hottest days of the year, but thankfully they were accompanied by cold nights which tempered their effects. Foggy mornings and warm sunny afternoons in August and September ushered in an early harvest of pristine and flavorful grapes. The wines are imbued with a bright fresh acidity provided by the ample, shading canopies, along with the ripeness and allure of a droughty growing season.

Vineyards

Our Stags Leap District and Calistoga estate vineyards build the foundation of this wine with support from valued grower sites located in Oakville, Rutherford, and Howell Mountain. Composed of small batches from a variety of blocks of varying age, this wine represents a diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, with a focus on canopy management and vine balance. The resulting blend boasts a remarkable depth and complexity that is quintessential Napa Valley.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours. The freshly-harvested fruit immediately underwent rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, which included our cutting-edge optical sorter. Whole berries were gently delivered by gravity to tank using our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately seven days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, pumpovers, and punchdowns. Extended maceration ranging from four to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, allowing us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 48% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

Elegantly soft and lithe the 2021 coaxes the taster with warm dark chocolate and luscious black cherry aromas. More graphite, chocolate cake, crushed mulberries, and iron notes leap from the glass. The entry is filled with dark fruit flavors of cassis, blackberry, and blue berries and they're all tinged with floral notes of jasmine and violets. The polished tannins along the finish feel Cashmere-like and beg the taster for another sip.

– Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition: 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot, 1% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol: 14.2%
Production: 4,229 cases
Bottling Date: July 2023
Release Date: April 2024