

2005 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Owner Cliff Lede, viticulturalist David Abreu, Winemaker Michelle Edwards, and consultant Michel Rolland have come together to form an unrivalled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Vintage

In 2005 we saw a cool, dry start to the growing season, which was quickly replaced by a prolonged period of warm, wet weather throughout spring and right on into bloom. Warm, damp soils promoted continuous vine growth, while ideal temperatures during bloom ensured perfect fruit set. An excessive, if not record, crop load loomed, so early and repetitive thinning was required during the perfect summer growing conditions. A lack of excessive heat spikes or adverse weather during fall ripening allowed us to pursue record hang times, in some instances leaving fruit out to ripen on the vines into November. What resulted was an arduous harvest yielding a record crop of unusually complex berries. Creative vineyard management and winemaking practices allowed for a large harvest of exceptional quality, producing wines of unusual depth, complexity, and a clean sophisticated elegance not seen in recent vintages.

Vineyards

Fruit was sourced from our estate Twin Peaks Ranch on the Yountville Cross Road, as well as the hillside terraces of our Poetry vineyard, in which yields are maintained at sparse levels, ranging from 0.8 to 3.8 tons/acre. The wine is composed of small batches from many of our best blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting and refinement process. The whole berries were gently delivered to tank by our unusual crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days and fermentations were managed via a combination of *delestage* and pumpovers. Extended maceration from three to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, and allowed us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. This Cabernet Sauvignon underwent eighteen months of *elevage* in 70% new French oak and 30% neutral French oak.

Winemaker Notes

The 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District opens with initial scents of rich raspberry, fig compote, nutmeg, cinnamon, and cardamom. Once decanted, abundant aromas of iris root, lilac, osmanthus, pie crust, fenugreek, citral, and huckleberry burst from the glass. Upon entry, the mouth is stimulated by black cherries, white pepper, and a plush fine-grained minerality. A dense richness crosses the breadth of the palate as fine tannins slowly ebb into lingering acidity, gradually diffusing with the fatness of the finish.

Analysis

Composition:	85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 1% Malbec, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	14.8 %
Bottled:	June 2007
Release:	December 2007
Production:	5,816 cases