

2011 POETRY CABERNET SAUVIGNON, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Owner Cliff Lede, Vineyard Architect David Abreu, and Winemaker Chris Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Vintage

The 2011 vintage began with cool, wet weather that extended into spring, fully replenishing our reservoirs and water tables. Rain during flowering affected set for some varieties, causing shatter and lowering yields. Low temperatures delayed bud break and initial canopy development, but as the season progressed the vines developed healthy, vigorous canopies. Mild weather persisted through the summer and autumn resulting in the coolest vintage on record. Berry development and ripening were delayed by three weeks or more leading to full ripeness at low sugar levels and vibrant acidity. Many vineyards were dry farmed, or watered only once during the season, to further concentrate the fruit. This is a vintage where diligent farming practices, including intensive canopy management and low yields, have produced elegant wines with lovely balance and structure.

Vineyard

The Poetry Vineyard, carved into a steep west-facing hillside, reaches from the highest elevations of the Stags Leap District appellation to the valley floor. This vineyard draws its uniqueness from shallow, volcanic soils atop fractured shale. Due to the stressful nature of the site, the small vines develop slowly and yield small flavorful berries.

Winemaking

In the cool darkness of night, grapes were hand-picked under lights into twenty-five pound bins to minimize crushing. By early morning the grapes were subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process which includes our cutting edge optical sorter, and a slow, individual berry hand sort. The fruit was gently gravity-delivered to small tanks and wooden *cuves* by our unique crane system which kept a high percentage of whole berries intact. Cold soaks lasted from five to eight days, and fermentations were managed through a combination of pumpovers and *délestage*. Extended maceration of up to six weeks ensured exceptional extraction and fine-tuning of tannin profiles. Following eighteen months of *élevage* in new French oak, the blend was selected from our best lots of the Poetry Vineyard.

Tasting Notes

A pretty bouquet of berry compote and black fig leads to inviting notes of vanilla bean, brioche, and warm spices. Hints of rose petals and anise greet the senses as this lush, weighty wine entices the palate. This seamless expression of fruit, spice, and earth is highlighted by the minerality of crushed rocks, reminiscent of the volcanic rock of the Poetry Vineyard. It is the steep, terraced west-facing slopes of the Poetry vineyard that produce a wine of such purity and concentration that intrigues the senses now, yet has the intensity and structure to evolve in the cellar.

Analysis

Composition: 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Malbec
Alcohol: 14.9%
Bottling Date: July 2013
Release Date: September 2014
Production: 405 cases