

2013 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

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

An early, even growing season led the way to an excellent vintage in 2013. A warm, dry spring brought early bud break and uniform vine growth. Late June's heat wave led to an early and even veraison, followed by steady maturation during the temperate late summer and early fall. Ideal weather, with no detrimental heat spikes or rain events, allowed us to harvest individual vineyard blocks at optimal ripeness with no constraints. Yields were plentiful, due to the favorable weather during bloom, but berries remained small, resulting in wines of exceptional depth and concentration. Slow ripening retained acidity, creating wines that are balanced, profound, and beautiful.

Vineyards

Our Sauvignon Blanc is a lively, yet elegant, expression of this varietal in Napa Valley. The primary source for this wine is a vineyard located in eastern Rutherford. There, old vines planted to a heritage Musqué clone and Sémillon provide density, richness, and citrus notes. Another component of the Sauvignon Blanc is sourced from a vineyard in the southeastern hills of Napa Valley residing on ancient, weathered, alluvial fans of silty impoverished soils that contribute an intense brightness and mineral austerity. In addition, we include fruit from a cooler climate vineyard on the east side of Napa, imparting vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. A vineyard in Chiles Valley, a small pocket in eastern Napa County, contributes tropical Sauvignon Blanc character and old vine Sauvignon Vert to the blend.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-harvested and arrived at the winery at dawn. The grapes were then held in controlled conditions of low oxygen and cold temperatures. Followed by meticulous hand-sorting, some of the fruit underwent gentle, whole-cluster pressing and another portion was subjected to between six and twelve hours of skin contact prior to pressing. The juice was fermented in 50% stainless steel tanks, 44% French, mostly neutral, oak barrels, and 6% concrete eggs. All fermentations were conducted at cold temperatures to preserve the freshness of the fruit. Upon reaching dryness, the wine was aged on its lees and underwent daily or weekly *battonage*. Secondary fermentation was suppressed.

Winemaker Notes

With the cut and color of yellow sapphire, the 2013 Sauvignon Blanc shines brilliantly in the glass and tempts with alluring aromas of lemon verbena, fall persimmon, and fresh white peaches. Gorgeous floral notes of orange blossom, honeysuckle, and night blooming jasmine intertwine with the top notes of the effusive bouquet. This unctuous styled white coats the palate with layers of lemon curd, quince paste, candle wax, and honeyed citrus marmalade. A vibrant spine of minerality supports the rich mouthfeel and lends notes of gunflint, powdery talc, and wet stone to the finish.

Analysis

Composition: 91% Sauvignon Blanc, 7% Sémillon, 2% Sauvignon Vert
Alcohol: 14.7%
Production: 6581 cases
Bottling Date: March 2014
Release Date: May 2014