

2016 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2016 vintage was the last in a series of several dry and warm winters here in Napa Valley. The dry winter was followed by a warm, frost free spring. This led to an early bud break in our white varieties, setting the stage for an early vintage that progressed at a leisurely pace due to moderate temperatures throughout most of the remaining growing season. Crop levels were slightly below average due to dry conditions and a cool weather spell during flowering. The dry soils led to low vigor vines and small berries, creating very concentrated fruit. With lovely summer weather, it was our earliest harvest on record and our white grapes were all in the winery by September 3rd.

Vineyards

Our Sauvignon Blanc is a lively, yet elegant, expression of this varietal in Napa Valley. The primary vineyard source, located in eastern Rutherford, is home to old vines planted to a heritage Musqué clone and Sémillon, providing density, richness, and citrus notes. Two other old-vine vineyards, both in Calistoga, contribute to the blend, one planted to Sauvignon Blanc and the other to Sémillon. In addition, we include grapes 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, adds complexity with old vines of Sauvignon Vert planted in 1947. We are pleased to include our first estate grown Sauvignon Blanc from our property in Calistoga, where we planted Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Musqué, and are delighted with the floral notes and mouthwatering acidity this vineyard contributes to the blend.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-harvested in the cool darkness of night and arrived at the winery at dawn. The grapes were then held in controlled conditions of low oxygen and cold temperatures. Approximately three-quarters of the fruit underwent gentle, whole-cluster pressing, and the remainder was destemmed before spending between six and twelve hours of skin contact prior to pressing. The juice was fermented in 54% French oak barrels, 41% stainless steel tanks, and 5% 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 *battelage*.

Winemaker Notes

The 2016 Sauvignon Blanc is loaded with aromas of Meyer lemon, short bread, honeysuckle, ginger, and tangerine. Spring blossoms of wisteria and orange abound in the upper register of the seductive perfume. The full-bodied, coating mouthfeel expands out on the palate with a rich crème brûlée-like texture as unctuous notes of Bosc pear, orange marmalade, and lavender honey coalesce along the long, satisfying finish. -Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 82% Sauvignon Blanc, 14% Sémillon, 3% Sauvignon Vert, 1% Muscat Canelli
Alcohol: 14.4%
Production: 7,700 cases
Bottling Date: March 2017
Release Date: May 2017