

2018 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

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

Vintage

The 2018 vintage was a glorious growing year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by steady spring weather during flowering, allowing for an even and generous fruit set. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days and cool nights, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. Optimal ripeness was achieved thanks to an early autumn of consistently warm, but not hot, days. The pristine ripening conditions allowed for very intense fruit flavor concentrations. The wines show exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure.

Vineyards

The fruit was sourced from the hillside terraces of our Poetry Vineyard, our Twin Peaks Vineyard estate surrounding the winery, and a few neighboring vineyards in the Stags Leap District. The wine is composed of small lots from our best blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected clones and rootstocks. From Poetry's exposed, rocky terraces boasting volcanic origins, to the ancient riverbed alluvial soils of Twin Peaks, the breadth of contributing sites translates into a wine of impressive complexity.

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, 32% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

The seamless and integrated 2018 Stags Leap District Cabernet Sauvignon is a deep purple colored love letter to our favored appellation. Its beautiful, scorched earth, blackberry, warm blueberries, cool slate, and dark chocolate aromas envelop the glass and are complexed with ancho chile, cumin, braised meat juices, and new leather notes. There's a burst of black fruits and spring flowers on the palate followed by exquisitely polished and fine tannin that bring together all the layers in an impressive finish. – Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot, 3% Malbec, 2% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol: 14.9%
Production: 9,408 cases
Bottling Date: July 2020
Release Date: February 2021