

2003 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

One one-hundredth of the Napa Valley appellation in size, the Stags Leap District is noted for producing wines with a pronounced silkiness and supple tannin structure. A combination of well-drained, rocky soils warmed by afternoon sun and cooled by the influence of the San Pablo Bay produce expressive fruit with this small appellation's signature velvet-smooth texture.

Vintage

A warm March brought on an early budbreak, which was followed by a wet April. These late spring rains ensured that the vines were healthy as they went into a cooler-than-average summer. Harvest started amidst a see-saw of heat spikes followed by cool stretches causing a start-stop crush. Yields were below average by twenty five percent, but the cool pauses allowed us to wait and pick when the individual blocks were ready.

Vineyards

Fruit was sourced from both our estate vineyard on the Yountville Cross Road and the hillside terraces of our Poetry vineyard. Many vineyard blocks, comprising a wide range of rootstocks, clonal selections and trellis systems are included in this blend.

Winemaking

Hand harvested into small 35-pound boxes, the grapes were destemmed to tank for a two-day, pre-fermentation cold soak. Selected lots underwent extended maceration to further develop the tannin structure. The free run was separated from the press wine and racked into thin-stave French chateau style oak barrels (65 percent of which were new), where the wine was aged for 24 months. In order to preserve its inherent concentration and rich texture, the wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

Winemaker Notes

Greeted by nuances of allspice, nutmeg, and clove, followed closely by mulberry, osmanthus flower, and black cherries, this well-balanced and luscious wine is a fine example of its Stags Leap District appellation. Favors of sweet currant, chocolate, and red cherry explode on the palate, which lead to a delicate finish of soft, sweet tannins and bright acidity

Analysis

Composition:	69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 1% Malbec
Alcohol:	14.6%
Production:	1948 cases
Bottled:	December 2005
Release:	March 2006