

2003 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, DIAMOND MOUNTAIN

Vintage

A warm March brought on an early bud-break, 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.

Vineyard

Diamond Mountain is most noted for its very fine grained volcanic ash soils which contribute a great deal to the flavor structure and unique tannin profile of the resultant wines. The vineyard from which the fruit for this wine was sourced resides at approximately 1000 feet and consists of a steep, terraced south facing slope that provides morning sunlight for optimal ripening. The climate is influenced by ocean breezes and fog, resulting in large temperature swings between day and night, which help to preserve the acidity of the grapes.

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 (100% new), where the wine was aged for 24 months. In order to preserve its inherent concentration and rich texture, the wine was bottled unfined and unfiltered.

Winemaker Notes

Intense and pronounced aromas of spicebox, maduro cigar wrapper, sweetbriar, mulberry, and flint [gunpowder!] leap wantonly from the glass in a battonade of scent. The mouth is dominated by a burst of violets and cassis, followed by a tight core of glycerol, fine tannin and fresh acidity. A return to the initial essences of mineral and spice are perpetuated by a lingering finish that should dictate a wine to savour now with roasts or tartines, or to set aside and allow this beauty to age with grace.

Analysis

Composition: 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot
Alcohol: 14.9%
Production: 379 cases

Bottled: December 2005
Release: February 2007

Suggested retail price: \$48