

2004 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

An early, warm start to spring was followed by cooler weather during flowering. This led to a smaller and more concentrated crop. A brief, yet intense ripening period (temperatures hovered over 100° F for several days) allowed fruit to achieve superb ripeness while maintaining a generous balance of acidity and richness.

Vineyards

The majority of the fruit was sourced from our vineyards in the Stags Leap District. Additionally, small lots were incorporated from selected prestigious Napa Valley vineyards. 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 3-5 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 (68 percent of which were new), where the wine was aged for 19 months. In order to preserve its inherent concentration and rich texture, the wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

Winemaker Notes

This fruit forward and friendly wine is brimming with violets, blueberries, ripe plum, and blackcurrant. Initial aromas of star jasmine, red and black currants, and wild strawberry are framed in the glass by a wealth of uplifting floral high notes, with just a hint of cherry and citrus. On the palate one is greeted with pie cherry, blueberry tart, and lots of kir. This mouth-pleasing entry quickly expands into fullness across the palate suffused with crème de cassis of some density, gradually relegating to a soft finish of plum and a gentle tannin complex.

Analysis

Composition: 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Malbec
Alcohol: 14.7%
Production: 2798 cases
Bottled: July 2006
Release: December 2006