

2005 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, DIAMOND MOUNTAIN

These Cabernet Sauvignons, made from only the best fruit from select vineyards, are quintessential representatives of some of Napa's most renowned appellations.

Vintage

The cool, dry conditions at the start of 2005 were quickly replaced by a prolonged period of warm, wet weather throughout spring. Tepid, damp soils promoted continuous vine growth, while ideal temperatures during bloom ensured perfect fruit set. An excessive crop load loomed, so early and repetitive thinning was necessary. A lack of adverse weather during fall ripening allowed us to pursue record hang times, in some instances leaving fruit out to ripen on the vines into November. The result was a large harvest of exceptional quality, producing wines of unusual depth, complexity, and a clean sophisticated elegance not seen in recent vintages.

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

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered hand-sorting process. The berries were gently delivered to tank by our unique crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days and fermentations were managed via a combination of delestage and pumpovers. Extended maceration from three to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, and allowed us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. This Cabernet Sauvignon underwent eighteen months of elevage in 75% new French oak and 25% neutral French oak.

Winemaker notes

With a perfumed nose that swirls with cassis, white pepper, and layers of jasmine, the aromas gradually evolve into spicier elements like cardamom, sage, and oolong tea. A delicate entry of sweet fruit is framed by soft, mounting tannins and a lingering acidity that decries a fuller palate than perhaps suggested by the nose. Plums, violets, rose water and more cassis are all evident in the mouth, while fine tannins with just a hint of dryness intertwine with the bright finish to leave the mouth both sated and demanding more.

Composition: 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot
Bottled: June 2007
Alcohol: 14.8%
Release: October 1, 2008
Production: 433 cases