

2006 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Owner Cliff Lede, viticulturalist David Abreu, Winemaker Michelle Edwards, and consultant Michel Rolland have come together to form an unrivalled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Vintage

Weather patterns during the 2006 growing season shifted abruptly, as if on command, to meet the needs of the developing fruit. Cool and wet conditions throughout April resulted in a late budbreak, about three weeks later than average. The swift transition to warm, dry weather in May was instrumental in quick bloom and fruit set, with strong growth and great set throughout. Just at the onset of *veraison* summer's heat intensified, resulting in many straight days of triple digits. The hottest July on record gave way to below-average temperatures in August and September, allowing even ripening and long hang times. Overall, the combination of perfect fruit set and ideal ripening has produced very concentrated wines that will mark 2006 as one of the great Napa vintages.

Vineyards

Fruit was sourced from our estate Twin Peaks Ranch on the Yountville Cross Road, as well as the hillside terraces of our Poetry vineyard. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, ranging from 0.8 to 3.8 tons per acre. The wine is composed of small batches from many blocks, representing the diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting and refinement process. The whole berries were gently delivered to tank by our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted three to six days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *delestage* and pumpovers. Extended maceration ranging from three to four weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, allowing us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in 40% new French oak and 60% neutral oak for eighteen months.

Winemaker Notes

The 2006 Claret opens with a beautifully balanced bouquet of white pepper, wild berries, and red clay, later exposing hints of old Bordeaux such as dusty parchment, leather and spice box. This medium-bodied wine opens with refreshing purity. It has a framework of soft tannins and boasts flavors of rose petals, fresh plums and fig.

Analysis

Composition: 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol: 14.9%
Bottled: June 2008
Release: October 1, 2008
Production: 978 cases