

2007 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL MOUNTAIN

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Owner Cliff Lede, viticulturalist David Abreu, Associate Winemaker Kale Anderson, and Consulting Winemaker Philippe Melka have come together to form an unrivalled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Vintage

The lack of winter rainfall resulted in low soil moisture at the start of the vintage. With a gradual transition into spring and the earliest irrigation on record, 2007 opened with cool weather and early growth. A mild April turned to a hot May and June, with grapevines blazing through bloom and the first phase of development. Late summer heat punctuated the start of harvest. Finally, a good rain in late October brought harvest to a close. The 2007 vintage is most noted for its dry start and small berry size with pronounced flavors of unusual depth and complexity.

Vineyards

Our Fruit is sourced from exceptional high-elevation vineyards with volcanic soils in the Howell Mountain Appellation. The sun-drenched mountaintop vineyards have southwestern exposure and late afternoon breezes that ripen the fruit slowly and evenly. Cool nights promote balanced structure and acidity in the finished wines.

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 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 tuned those mountain tannins, allowing us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in 80% new French oak for eighteen months.

Winemaker Notes

Black pepper and crème de cassis turn to blackberry and violet as the wine opens and the aromas escape from the glass. A well-balanced mouth feel of cinnamon and currant showoff the mid-palate, followed by an impressive finish, layered with blackberry pie, coffee, and graphite.

Analysis

Composition:	89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	15.1%
Bottled:	June 2009
Release:	November 2010
Production:	206 cases