

2007 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The lack of winter rainfall resulted in a severe soil moisture deficit at the start of the 2007 vintage. With a gradual transition to spring, and with the earliest irrigation on record, 2007 opened with cool weather and early growth. A mild April abruptly turned into a hot May and June, with grapevines blazing through bloom, fruit set, and the first phase of development. Even hotter weather in late summer incited some early berry shrivel and punctuated the start of harvest. Finally, a good rain in late October brought the harvest to a close. The vintage of 2007, which will prove to be a short crop by 10-25%, is most noted for its dry start and small berry size. In the end, the undersized crop came in with decidedly pronounced flavors of unusual depth and complexity.

Vineyard

The majority of the fruit was sourced from a vineyard in the southeastern hills of Napa Valley. This vineyard resides on ancient, weathered, alluvial fans of silty, impoverished soils that contribute an intense brightness and mineral austerity. In addition, we included fruit from a delightful cooler climate vineyard on the east side of Napa, imparting a vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. Finally, we incorporated some Sauvignon Blanc grapes from vineyards in the Oakville and Rutherford appellations which assisted in providing a distinctively rich component that reflects their superb microclimates.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-harvested from August 31st to September 10th and arrived at the winery at the crack of dawn. Once received, the grapes were held in controlled atmospheric conditions of low oxygen and cold temperatures. Following intensive hand sorting, the majority of the fruit underwent gentle whole-cluster pressing. The juice was fermented in 59% stainless steel tanks, 27% French oak barrels (26% new), 7% stainless steel drums, and 7% concrete eggs, all at cold temperatures to preserve the freshness of the fruit and to build complexity. Upon reaching dryness, the wine was aged on its lees and underwent weekly battonage. Secondary fermentation was suppressed.

Tasting Notes

The 2007 Cliff Lede Sauvignon Blanc has aromas of mock-orange blossom, passion fruit, green ginger, and white pepper upon layers of almonds, tarragon-citrus, pomegranate, and Lily-of-the-Valley. On the palate, citrus-driven flavors of peach liquor, honeyed lime, and white currant toy playfully with the dry nutty fatness of candied ginger and creamy marzipan.

Analysis

Composition: 99% Sauvignon Blanc, 1% Sauvignon Musqué

Alcohol: 14.5%

T.A.: 7.2g/l

pH: 3.32

Production: 3,354 cases

Bottling Date: March 2008

Release Date: May 2008