

2008 Cliff Lede High Fidelity, Napa Valley

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

Vintage

The growing season started with low soil moisture due to an abbreviated rainy season that delivered sparse precipitation. Vintage 2008, like the previous year, would unfold under drought conditions. Spring and an early bud break were greeted by an extended cold spell through early May, resulting in delayed growth and multiple days of frost. Bloom time finally saw a warming trend, allowing berry development to progress rapidly under warm and clear summer days, with the fog absent until the onset of *veraison*. Ripening progressed slowly and evenly. Then, as summer gave way to fall, building temperatures led to an early harvest. On par with the low yields of 2007, the 2008 vintage relays balanced crop flavors and profound intensity.

Vineyards

Fruit was sourced from our Twin Peaks Ranch and a few of our valued growers within the Napa Valley. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, ranging from 2 to 3.5 tons per acre. The wine is composed of small lots from a variety of 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 hand sorting process. The whole berries were gently delivered to tank by our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *delestage*, pumpovers, and punchdowns. 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 72% new French oak for eighteen months.

Winemaker Notes

Inspired by the opulent right bank blends of Bordeaux, this wine is built from fine-grained Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Persimmon, nutmeg, allspice, and cassis evolve in multiple layers. Sweet black tea, plum, tar, and cocoa powder build through the finish. The tannins are silky and generous, which indicates that this wine will continue to develop over the next 15 years.

Analysis

Composition:	40% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec, 5% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	15.0%
Bottled:	June 2010
Release:	February 2011
Production:	661 cases