

2008 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

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 budbreak were greeted by an extended cold spell through early May, resulting in delayed growth and multiple days of frost. Bloomtime 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 light yields of 2007, the 2008 vintage relays balanced crop flavors and profound intensity.

Vineyards

A portion of the Sauvignon Blanc 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. This source imparts vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. Finally, we incorporated Sauvignon Blanc grapes from a vineyard in the Rutherford appellation which provided richness.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-harvested and arrived at the winery at dawn. Once received, the grapes were held in controlled conditions of low oxygen and cold temperatures. Followed by meticulous hand-sorting, some of the fruit underwent gentle whole-cluster pressing and another portion was subjected to 16 hours of skin contact prior to pressing. The juice was fermented in 58% stainless steel tanks, 28% French oak barrels (12% new oak, 16% neutral oak), 8% stainless steel drums, and 6% 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 2008 Cliff Lede Sauvignon Blanc displays aromas of Kaffir lime, iris, passion fruit, tarragon, citrus, white pepper, *framboise*, toasted almond, and freesia. With a poignant mouth defined by good glycerol weight, flavors of lemon meringue, honeysuckle, brioche and guava flow over the palate with a finish reminiscent of desert wildflowers and dry land honey.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Sauvignon Blanc
Alcohol: 14.1%
Production: 4,606 cases
Bottling Date: March 2009
Release Date: May 2009