

2009 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

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

Vintage

The growing season started under drought conditions. Springtime rains recharged the soil, and the vines responded with moderate vigor. Set was below normal due to some warm and dry winds. Berry development progressed rapidly under warm and clear summer days, with fog blankets in the morning hours. Ripening progressed slowly and evenly. Then, as summer gave way to fall, moderate temperatures led to an early harvest. Low yields balanced the vines naturally, and contributed to intense wines. Typical of an El Nino winter, early rains soaked the Napa Valley with five inches or more precipitation in mid-October. Fortunately, all of our fruit was ripe and was harvested prior to the unseasonable rains.

Vineyards

The fruit was sourced from our estate Twin Peaks Ranch, as well as the hillside terraces of our Poetry vineyard. The wine is composed of small lots from many of our best blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones. From exposed, rocky terraces to heavier alluvial soils, the breadth of contributing sites translates into a wine of impressive complexity.

Winemaking

The 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 build mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in 60% new French oak for seventeen months.

Winemaker Notes

Intense blackberry liqueur and espresso bean develop into rose and truffle oil aromas as the wine opens. Creamy and opulent, flavors of semi-sweet chocolate, mocha, and plum layer the front and mid-palate. A beam of fresh minerality (archetypal Stags Leap District character) frames the long silky finish. Decanting is recommended. Revisit over 24 hours as new layers develop with time.

Analysis

Composition:	90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec, 1% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol:	14.9%
Bottled:	July 2011
Release:	October 2011
Production:	5913 cases