

2009 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 Winemaker Kale Anderson, 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

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 83% new French oak for eighteen months.

Winemaker Notes

Inspired by the right bank blends of Bordeaux, this is the first Cliff Lede Vineyard blend based on Cabernet Franc. Black plum, espresso, and tobacco leaf characters develop into dried flowers on the nose. A rich, opulent texture in the mid-palate is layered with plum and allspice. The silky tannins are braced by a beam of minerality that extends through the finish indicating the benefits of cellaring.

Analysis

Composition:	36% Cabernet Franc, 28% Merlot, 27% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Malbec
Alcohol:	14.9%
Bottled:	July 2011
Release:	February 2012
Production:	797 cases