

2009 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

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

Vintage

Vintage 2009, like the previous year, 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 5 inches or more precipitation in mid-October. Fortunately, all Estate and Grower fruit was harvested prior to the unseasonable rains.

Vineyards

A portion of the Sauvignon Blanc fruit is 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 include fruit from a delightful cooler climate vineyard on the east side of Napa. This source imparts vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. We feature Sauvignon Blanc grapes from a vineyard in the Rutherford appellation which provides richness. Finally, our newest source of Sauvignon Blanc vineyard is 100% Sauvignon Musque clone in the Yountville Appellation contributing explosive aromas and tropical flavors to the blend.

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 60% stainless steel tanks, 29% French oak barrels (15% new oak, 14% neutral oak), 6% stainless steel drums, and 5% 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.

Winemaker Notes

Intense citrus blossom, honeysuckle, and tropical undertones of pineapple, calamansi lime, and passion fruit describe the nose of the 2009 Sauvignon Blanc. The wider use of the Musque clone in this blend contributes to this vintage's intense floral and tropical flavors. Subtle notes of marzipan, ginger, and tarragon add complexity in the finish complimenting the lemon meringue and strawberry guava base. The crisp minerality lifts the flavors in the palette making this wine perfect with spicy dishes.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Sauvignon Blanc
Alcohol: 14.5%
Production: 5,516 cases
Bottling Date: March 2010
Release Date: May 2010
Price: \$22.00