

2010 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL MOUNTAIN

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

Vintage

The 2010 vintage began with a wet winter that kept the soil moist into spring. The vines responded with moderate vigor and healthy canopies. The cool temperatures in the spring continued through harvest resulting in one of Napa Valley's coolest vintages on record. The below average temperatures slowed berry development and ripening by two to three weeks in most varieties resulting in full ripeness at lower sugar levels. Early season thinning lowered yields and allowed the grapes to achieve optimal ripeness, and careful canopy management protected the fruit from a couple of heat waves in late August and September. Most of the crop was harvested in mid-October during an intense two week period taking advantage of the warmth in October and before the early November rains.

Vineyards

Exceptional high-elevation vineyards with volcanic soils in the Howell Mountain Appellation produce intensely concentrated grapes for this wine. The sun-drenched mountaintop vineyards have southwestern exposure and late afternoon breezes that ripen the fruit slowly and evenly. Cool nights promote balanced structure and acidity in the finished wines.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered hand-sorting system. The berries were gently delivered by gravity to tank using our distinctive crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five to eight days and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, punchdowns, and pumpovers. Extended maceration from three to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles. The wine underwent eighteen months of *élevage* in French oak, of which 80% was new. It was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

Winemaker Notes

Redolent of rose petals and wild cherry, this wine greets the senses and introduces enticing savory olive tapenade and smoked meat aromas, balanced with hints of chocolate and dried sweet tea leaves. Silky and sexy, this Howell Mountain Cabernet exhibits refined tannins and vibrant acidity, showcasing the classic Howell Mountain balance between structure and grace.

Analysis

Composition:	99% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	14.9%
Bottling Date:	July 2012
Release Date:	October 2013
Production:	674 Cases