

2011 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, NAPA VALLEY

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 2011 vintage began with cool wet weather that extended into spring, fully replenishing our reservoirs and water tables. Rain during flowering affected set for some varieties, causing shatter and lowering yields. Low temperatures delayed bud break and initial canopy development, but as the season progressed, the vines developed healthy, vigorous canopies. Cool weather persisted through the summer and autumn, resulting in the coolest vintage on record. Berry development and ripening were delayed by three weeks or more, leading to full ripeness at low sugar levels and vibrant acidity. Many vineyards were dry farmed or watered only once during the season to further concentrate the fruit. This is a vintage where diligent farming practices, including intensive canopy management and low yields, have produced elegant wines with lovely balance and structure.

Vineyards

Fruit was sourced from our Twin Peaks Vineyard in the Stags Leap District and a few of our valued growers within Napa Valley. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, with a focus on canopy management and vine balance. The wine is composed of small batches from a variety of blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones, to assemble a blend with depth and 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 gravity-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 *délestage*, 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 French oak for eighteen months.

Winemaker Notes

Aromas of fresh crushed raspberries, kirsch, and black plum are highlighted with hints of Tahitian vanilla, Belgian chocolate, and toasty *pain grillé*. The candied violet and black cherry flavors dance on the palate revealing ripe, supple tannins complemented by gravelly minerality and a long luscious finish.

Analysis

Composition: 69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot, 6% Cabernet Franc,
1% Malbec
Alcohol: 14.4%
Bottled: July 2013
Release: December 2013
Production: 1041 Cases