

2011 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, Vineyard Architect David Abreu, and Winemaker Chris Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled 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

The fruit was sourced from our Twin Peaks Vineyard estate, as well as the hillside terraces of our Poetry Vineyard, and a few, select neighboring growers in the Stags Leap District. The wine is composed of small lots from many of our best blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected clones and rootstocks. From exposed, rocky terraces that are volcanic in origin to valley-floor alluvial soils, the breadth of contributing sites translates into a wine of impressive complexity.

Winemaking

Hand harvested in the cool early morning hours, the fruit was immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, including our cutting edge optical sorter, with a goal of eliminating less-than-perfect berries. The selected fruit was gently delivered to tank via gravity by our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed by a combination of *délestage*, pumpovers, and punchdowns. Extended maceration ranging from three to four weeks fine-tuned tannin profiles, allowing us to build mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 59% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

Bing cherry, kirsch, and dark chocolate aromas are complemented by hints of cardamom, star anise, and clove. A note of dried sage builds upon the earthy minerality redolent of crushed rock. Supple, supportive tannins create a velvety texture and lengthy finish for this elegant, mineral-laced wine.

Analysis

Composition: 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot, 3% Malbec
Alcohol: 14.3%
Production: 6,017 cases
Bottling Date: July 2013
Release Date: February 2014