

2011 MOONDANCE DREAM 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

This blend is primarily sourced from two distinctive blocks named after the classic rock songs “Moondance” and “Dream On,” located on our Poetry estate vineyard. The steep terraced hillside vines of Cabernet Sauvignon in “Dream On” offer intense structure and concentration, while the rolling hills of “Moondance” add opulence and polish. Small percentages of Petit Verdot, Malbec, and Merlot from our Twin Peaks estate harmonize with the Cabernet to add nuance and aromatic lift.

Winemaking

Our estate vineyard was harvested at night under lights into small lug bins. The fruit was delivered directly to the winery by tractor and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting system, including our cutting edge optical sorter. The berries were gently gravity-delivered to truncated tanks custom-designed to ferment each block of our estate vineyard individually. Following a five to eight day whole berry cold soak, fermentations were managed with cool temperatures and long pumpovers. An extended maceration period of four to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles. The wine underwent eighteen months of *élevage* in French oak barrels, 50% of which were new.

Winemaker Notes

Wild dark cherry, kirsch, and plum harmonize with melted dark chocolate and roasted nuts in this seductive, dreamy wine. After a silky entry, the volume is turned up by bright acidity, highlighting the darker fruit notes of blueberry and cassis and giving the wine a rocking attitude. The suede-like tannins and smoky, lengthy finish create an infinite decrescendo.

Analysis

Composition: 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot, 4% Malbec, 3% Merlot
Alcohol: 14.6%
Bottling Date: July 2013
Release Date: May 2014
Production: 829 cases

These go to eleven.