

2011 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, 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 a wet and cool winter that extended into spring. The heavy spring rains and cool temperatures lasted until late June. All our reservoirs, irrigation ponds, and water tables were fully replenished. Rain during flowering affected set for some varieties resulting in shatter – lowering yields up to fifty percent. The cool temperatures delayed bud break and canopy development. As the season progressed, the vines developed healthy, vigorous canopies. The cool weather persisted through the summer and autumn resulting in the coolest vintage on record. Berry development and ripening was delayed by three weeks or more in some varieties resulting in full ripeness at low sugar levels. Many vineyards were dry farmed, or watered only once during the season further concentrating the fruit.

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 2 delightful cooler climate vineyards on the east side of Napa. This source imparts vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. Another source, located in eastern Rutherford, provides density, richness, and tropical notes through the Musque clone and Semillon. A new source is located in Chiles Valley, a small pocket in eastern Napa Valley, contributing Sauvignon Blanc and old vine Muscadelle 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 between 6 and 24 hours of skin contact prior to pressing. The juice was fermented in 67% stainless steel tanks, 26% French oak barrels (7% new oak, 19% neutral oak), and 7% concrete eggs. All fermentations were conducted at cold temperatures to preserve the freshness of the fruit. Upon reaching dryness, the wine was aged on its lees and underwent daily or weekly *battonage*. Secondary fermentation was suppressed.

Winemaker Notes

Pear, lime zest, and apricot blossom aromas awaken the senses. The mid-palate expands into a rich and long finish. Melon and lychee are supported by flinty minerality, making this wine a perfect pairing for spicy dishes.

Analysis

Composition: 98% Sauvignon Blanc, 1% Semillon, 1% Muscadelle
Alcohol: 14.3%
Production: 6,111 cases
Bottling Date: March 2012
Release Date: May 2012