

2012 CLIFF LEDE HIGH FIDELITY, 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 unrivaled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Inspired by the right bank blends of Bordeaux, Merlot and Cabernet Franc dominate the blend in the 2012 High Fidelity.

Vintage

The 2012 vintage was a glorious year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by steady spring weather during flowering, allowing for even fruit set. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days, cool nights, and minimal heat spikes, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. The wines are showing exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure. Optimal ripeness was achieved thanks to an early autumn of consistently warm days.

Vineyards

The Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon lots in this blend are from our Twin Peaks estate vineyard, and the Cabernet Franc hails from acclaimed viticulturist David Abreu's Madrona Ranch. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, ranging from two to three tons per acre, with meticulous attention to detail in the vineyard. The wine is composed of just a few of our best lots from our most cherished sites.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, including our cutting edge optical sorter. The whole berries were gently delivered by gravity to tank using our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately seven days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, pumpovers, and punchdowns. Extended maceration ranging from four to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, allowing us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 70% of which was new, for eighteen months.

Winemaker Notes

The 2012 High Fidelity blend is built on the silky suppleness of Merlot, with Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Malbec adding structure, complexity, and richness. This full-bodied wine exhibits all of the seductive opulence of the vintage. Black cherry, anise, white chocolate, and Madagascar vanilla greet the senses in this generous bouquet. This opulent wine has intriguing hints of ferric and graphite minerality and exotic spice. Concentrated and rich, with polished tannins that create a lengthy and harmonious finish, this wine is an ode to the great wines of Pomerol and St. Emilion.

Analysis

Composition: 64% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Franc, 9% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 6% Malbec
Alcohol: 15.4%
Bottled: July 2014
Release: February 2015
Production: 784 cases