

2013 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD, NAPA VALLEY

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Cliff Lede, Vineyard Architect David Abreu, and Winemaker Christopher Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Vintage

An early growing season led the way to an excellent vintage in 2013. A warm, dry spring brought early bud break and uniform vine growth. A heat wave in late June led to an early and even veraison, followed by steady maturation during the temperate late summer and early fall. Ideal weather, with no detrimental heat spikes or rain events, allowed us to harvest individual vineyard blocks at optimal ripeness with no constraints. Yields were plentiful, due to the favorable weather during bloom, but berries remained small, resulting in wines of exceptional depth and concentration. Slow ripening retained acidity, creating wines that are balanced, profound, and beautiful.

Vineyards

Situated on the western Oakville bench, the vaunted Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard has gravelly loam soils with high mineral content derived from sedimentary deposits of the volcanic Mayacamas Mountains and the alluvial fan of the Napa River. The vineyard has low organic matter content and thorough drainage, which devigorates the vines and produces small berries that are ideal for wines with intense concentration. The site is warm and sunny throughout the day, but cooled by late afternoon breezes, producing ripe Cabernet Sauvignon with lovely acidity. The blocks that make up our blend represent a diverse array of the Beckstoffer To Kalon terroir and clonal selection, creating a unique and exceptional wine from this praised site.

Winemaking

In the cool darkness of night, grapes were hand-picked into twenty-five pound bins to minimize crushing. By early morning, the grapes were subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process which includes our cutting edge optical sorter, and a slow, individual berry, hand sort. The fruit was gently gravity-delivered to small tanks and wooden *cuvés* by our unique crane system which kept the berries intact. Cold soaks lasted from five to eight days, and fermentations were managed through a combination of pump overs and *délestage*. Extended maceration of up to six weeks ensured exceptional extraction and fine-tuning of tannin profiles. This wine underwent eighteen months of *élevage* in French oak barrels, 85% of which were new.

Tasting Notes

An elegant blend of gravelly loam and violets soar in the glass and intertwine with layers of blackberry and cassis. Integrated and focused notes of graphite, smoked cardamom, and dark chocolate fill out the upper register of aromas and are repeated on the palate. Flavors of dry aged steak and black truffles complement the elegant texture and full body. The gravel, loam, and graphite flavors reflect the terroir and allure of this legendary vineyard.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alcohol: 14.9%
Production: 481 cases
Bottling Date: July 2015
Release Date: April 2016