

2015 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, 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

The 2015 vintage was a wonderfully classic year for Napa Valley white wines. A dry winter, followed by warm spring temperatures, led to an early bud break that set the stage for one of the earliest harvests on record. Crop levels were lower than average due to dry conditions and a cool weather spell during flowering. The dry soils led to low vigor vines and small berries, creating very concentrated fruit. With lovely summer weather, it was our earliest harvest on record and our white grapes were all in the winery by September 3rd.

Vineyards

Our Sauvignon Blanc is a lively, yet elegant, expression of this varietal in Napa Valley. The primary vineyard source, located in eastern Rutherford, is home to old vines planted to a heritage Musqué clone and Sémillon, providing density, richness, and citrus notes. Another component of the blend is sourced from a vineyard in the southeastern hills of Napa Valley residing on ancient, weathered, alluvial fans of silty impoverished soils contributing intense brightness and minerality. In addition, we include grapes from a cooler climate vineyard on the east side of Napa, imparting vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. A vineyard in Chiles Valley, a small pocket in eastern Napa County, adds complexity with old vines of Sauvignon Vert planted in 1947.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-harvested in the cool darkness of night and arrived at the winery at dawn. The grapes were then held in controlled conditions of low oxygen and cold temperatures. Approximately three-quarters of the fruit underwent gentle, whole-cluster pressing, and the remainder was destemmed before spending between six and twelve hours of skin contact prior to pressing. The juice was fermented in 52% French, mostly neutral, oak barrels, 42% stainless steel tanks, and 6% 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

The 2015 Sauvignon Blanc is loaded with aromas of Meyer lemon and candle wax atop layers of honeysuckle, ginger, and tangerine. Spring blossoms of wisteria, lupin, and California buckeye abound in the upper register of the seductive perfume. The full-bodied, coating mouthfeel expands out on the palate with a rich crème brûlée like texture as unctuous notes of bosc pear, orange marmalade, and lavender honey coalesce along the long, satisfying finish.

Analysis

Composition: 82% Sauvignon Blanc, 14% Sémillon, 3% Sauvignon Vert, 1% Muscat Canelli
Alcohol: 14.4%
Production: 7,100 cases
Bottling Date: March 2016
Release Date: May 2016