

2017 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

Vintners won't soon forget the 2017 vintage in Napa Valley. A wet winter provided welcome relief from a prolonged drought that began with the 2012 vintage. Spring arrived early, bringing with it warm weather and soaking rains that segued to an early budbreak and the development of beautiful canopies. The season trended warm and was punctuated with a series of heatwaves, the most dramatic one over Labor Day weekend. The well-developed canopies protected the fruit in the heat and developed beautiful tropical flavors that led to a wine with lively fruit and voluptuous body. We began our harvest of Sauvignon Blanc on August 29th and brought in our last white varieties, Sémillon and Sauvignon Vert, by September 13th.

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. Two other old-vine vineyards, both in Calistoga, contribute to the blend, one planted to Sauvignon Blanc and the other to Sémillon. 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. We are pleased to include our first estate grown Sauvignon Blanc from our property in Calistoga, planted to Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Musqué, and are delighted with the floral notes and mouthwatering acidity this vineyard contributes to the blend.

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 58% French oak barrels, 37% stainless steel tanks, and 5% 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 *battelage*.

Winemaker Notes

The delectably bright and balanced 2017 Sauvignon Blanc is resplendent in a sea of citrus aromas and flavors. Meyer lemon, key lime, ruby grapefruit, and kumquat notes are lusciously entwined in the bouquet as well as in the flavors. As the wine opens in the glass, those citrus elements find further complexity with touches of pie crust, coconut, honeyed quince, and Thai basil. This charming wine is imbued with a bright acidity and a long, rich full bodied texture.

Analysis

Composition: 86% Sauvignon Blanc, 12% Sémillon, 2% Sauvignon Vert
Alcohol: 14.6%
Production: 8,428 cases
Bottling Date: March 2018
Release Date: May 2018