

2011 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL MOUNTAIN

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.

Vintage

The 2011 vintage began with cool wet weather that extended into spring, fully replenishing our reservoirs and water tables. Rain during flowering affected set for some varieties, causing shatter and lowering yields. Low temperatures delayed bud break and initial canopy development, but as the season progressed, the vines developed healthy, vigorous canopies. Cool weather persisted through the summer and autumn, resulting in the coolest vintage on record. Berry development and ripening were delayed by three weeks or more, leading to full ripeness at low sugar levels and vibrant acidity. Many vineyards were dry farmed or watered only once during the season to further concentrate the fruit. This is a vintage where diligent farming practices, including intensive canopy management and low yields, have produced elegant wines with lovely balance and structure.

Vineyards

Exceptional high-elevation vineyards with volcanic soils in the Howell Mountain Appellation produce intensely concentrated grapes for this wine. The sun-drenched mountaintop vineyards have southwestern exposure and late afternoon breezes that ripen the fruit slowly and evenly. Cool nights promote balanced structure and acidity in the finished wines.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered hand-sorting system. The berries were gently delivered by gravity to tank using our distinctive crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five to eight days and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, punchdowns, and pumpovers. Extended maceration from three to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles. The wine underwent eighteen months of *élevage* in French oak, of which 50% was new. It was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

Winemaker Notes

Lovely aromas of wild cherry, olallieberry jam, and strawberry compote are layered with profound, savory notes of boudin noir, camphor, and forest mulch. Smoldering embers, nori, and exotic spices are intriguing notes that introduce a delightful and unique sensory experience. The tannins are classic Howell Mountain, giving this wine power to complement the elegant complex aromatic profile.

Analysis

Composition:	94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	14.1%
Bottling Date:	July 2013
Release Date:	October 2014
Production:	442 Cases