

2013 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, 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.

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. Late June's heat wave 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

Fruit was sourced from our Twin Peaks Vineyard in the Stags Leap District and a few of our valued growers within Napa Valley. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, with a focus on canopy management and vine balance. The wine is composed of small batches from a variety of blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones, to assemble a blend with depth and complexity.

Winemaking

The grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered hand sorting process. The whole berries were gently gravity-delivered to tank by our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, pumpovers, and punch downs. Extended maceration ranging from three to four weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, allowing us to build mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak for eighteen months.

Winemaker Notes

The precocious and playful 2013 Claret is so full of youthful exuberance, that it's a joy to drink now. Intense aromas of black fig, chocolate covered cherries, and silky cassis leap from the glass. Spice notes of cardamom, Tahitian vanilla, and anise intertwine with the dark fruit notes to give complexity and nuance. With time in the decanter, the lush and silky texture unfolds, enveloping the palate like fine cashmere. This comely and versatile wine will pair effortlessly with a multitude of cuisines.

Analysis

Composition:	42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Malbec, 14% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc, 6% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	15.4%
Bottled:	July 2015
Release:	December 2015
Production:	984 Cases