

2015 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2015 vintage was a wonderfully classic year for Napa Valley 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 the red wines we produced are opulent, voluptuous wines with incredible concentration.

Vineyards

The Bordeaux varietal grapes in our Claret blend are sourced from our estate Twin Peaks Vineyard in the Stags Leap District and a few of our valued grower partners within Napa Valley. The wine is composed of small batches from a variety of blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, with a focus on canopy management and vine balance. The resulting blend boasts remarkable 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 twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

A dark and dense ruby, the 2015 Claret offers up gorgeous aromas of fig, summer cherry cobbler, blackberries, cocoa powder, cinnamon, and espresso. Blueberry and warm damson plum flavors cascade along the palate with a rich and silky texture. It is built on a broad foundation of lush, sweet tannin and abounds with pretty loam, persimmon, and black currant notes. – Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 66% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot, 8% Malbec, 5% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol: 15.2%
Bottled: July 2017
Release: December 2017
Production: 1,029 cases