

2016 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2016 vintage continued a series of exceptional vintages in Napa Valley. Another drought year, 2016 began with a dry winter, followed by a warm, frost-free early spring with just enough rainfall to fill the soil profile, leading to an early budbreak with resources to develop healthy canopies. The vintage progressed at a leisurely pace due to moderate temperatures throughout most of the remaining growing season. Crop levels were slightly below average due to a dry late spring and a cool weather spell during flowering. The dry soils led to small berries, creating very concentrated fruit. With lovely summer weather, grapes were harvested at optimal ripeness and the resulting wines have generous fruit with intensity and vibrancy.

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

The playful and alluring 2016 Claret is laden with rich cassis, blackberry, and Luxardo cherry aromas that burst from the glass. There is an abundance of heady black licorice flavors, and gobs of milk chocolate truffle, clove, and rose petal flavors abound. There is an easy, seamless character that pervades this wine making it all the more captivating. The delicious tannin is so silky and plush that it begs one for another taste. – Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Malbec, 20% Petit Verdot, 13% Merlot 5% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol: 15.2%
Bottled: July 2018
Release: December 2018
Production: 1,705 cases