

2017 DANCING HEART CABERNET SAUVIGNON, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Cliff Lede, Vineyard Architect David Abreu, and Winemaker Christopher Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

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 heat waves, the most dramatic one over Labor Day weekend. The well-developed and meticulously manicured canopies, along with strategically placed shade cloth, protected the natural acidity and delicate fruit flavors during the warm spells. All of the fruit was harvested well ahead of the fires and the resulting wines are laden with lively fruit flavors and voluptuous body.

Vineyards

Our estate vineyard blocks are named after Cliff's favorite rock songs and albums. The name of this blend is derived from Rush's "Closer to the Heart" in our Poetry vineyard and from Bruce Springsteen's "Dancing in the Dark" in our Twin Peaks vineyard. The Cabernet Sauvignon in "Closer to the Heart" is planted in shallow volcanic soil and farmed to low yields, contributing structure, concentration and classic Stags Leap character to the backbone of the blend. "Dancing in the Dark" is a block of Cabernet that contributes a luxurious perfume, flavors of ripe, dark fruit, and plush texture.

Winemaking

In the cool darkness of night, grapes were hand-picked into twenty-five pound bins to minimize crushing. By early morning, the grapes were subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process which includes our cutting edge optical sorter, and a slow, individual berry hand sort. The fruit was gently gravity-delivered to small tanks by our unique crane system which kept the berries intact. Cold soaks lasted from five to eight days, and fermentations were managed through a combination of pump overs and *délestage*. Extended maceration of up to six weeks ensured exceptional extraction and fine-tuning of tannin profiles. This wine underwent twenty-one months of *élevage* in French oak barrels, 85% of which were new.

Winemaker Notes

The 2017 Dancing Heart opens with a gorgeously labyrinthine perfume of warm black cherries scented with lavender and violets. Mineral and stone aromas go sailing across the complex bouquet. There a spark of intensity to the luscious cassis and raspberry flavors and they're tinged with savory iron, graphite, and grilled steak juices. Bright and fleshy, the finish carries a dark and wonderful mix of roasted red peppers, slate, and dried fig flavors. – Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Petit Verdot, 3% Merlot, and 1% Malbec
Production: 1,919 cases
Bottling Date: July 2019
Release Date: April 2020

These go to eleven.