

2016 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, CALISTOGA

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

Located at the base of Diamond Mountain in the western portion of the Calistoga appellation, our Calistoga estate vineyard has twenty acres of vineyard planted mostly to Cabernet Sauvignon. The gravelly loam soils are volcanic in origin with alluvial influence made evident by copious amounts of water-rolled gravel and large cobbles. While Calistoga can experience quite hot daytime temperatures, our estate is protected from the afternoon sun by Diamond Mountain to our west. Cool breezes from the Pacific are drawn in by the narrow gap between Napa and Sonoma Counties, further mediating the hot days. The result is powerful, rich Cabernet with balanced acidity.

Winemaking

Hand harvested in the cool dark of night, the fruit was brought to the winery and subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, including our cutting edge optical sorter, with a goal of eliminating less-than-perfect berries. The selected fruit was gently delivered to tank via gravity by our crane system, retaining perfect, whole berries. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed by a combination of *délestage* and pump overs. Extended maceration, ranging from three to four weeks, fine-tuned tannin profiles, allowing us to build structure and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 89% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

Atop the invitingly seductive and opaque purple colored 2016 Calistoga, wafts a lavish perfume of spring violet and lilacs. Intense flavors of warm mulberry and mineral tinged cassis aromas luxuriate across the palate followed by spice notes of cardamom, clove, and ancho chile. This vineyard's signature black truffle note is intertwined with loamy gravel notes, black peppercorns, and grilled steak drippings. This wine is imbued with a wide expansive finish that lasts more than a minute and never loses its focus.

– Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition:	90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	15.4%
Bottling Date:	July 2018
Release Date:	October 2019
Production:	547 Cases