

2016 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL MOUNTAIN

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

Exceptional high-elevation vineyards in the Howell Mountain appellation produce intensely concentrated grapes for this wine. Soils are volcanic in origin and consist of two main types; the first is decomposed volcanic ash called tufa, and the second is red volcanic rock and clay that is high in iron. Both are nutrient poor, which stresses the vines, producing intense and structured wines from small clusters and berries. The altitude, climate, and soils combine to create a classic mountain Cabernet Sauvignon with incredible concentration, texture, and structure.

Winemaking

Hand harvested in the cool early morning hours, the fruit was immediately 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, 51% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

Flaunting its “sense of place” the 2016 Howell Mountain announces its arrival in the glass with a thunderous display of terroir notes. Pine forest sous bois, with its fresh resinous aromas leads aromas in the glass. Following closely are the loam and dried leaves scents. Flourishes of black cherry flavors and cocoa powder envelop the palate on entry with grilled steak and nori wrapper adding savory umami touches. Wide and expansive on the palate, the wine finishes long and seductively. There’s a polish to the big mountain tannins that makes this wine irresistible. -Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Composition:	97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	15.2%
Bottling Date:	July 2018
Release Date:	October 2019
Production:	741 cases