

2017 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, NAPA VALLEY

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 heatwaves, 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

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 2017 Claret is a fresh and elegantly delineated wine boasting a mix of inviting fruit and spice notes. This dark ruby colored wine is laden with chocolate covered cherries, powered cocoa, and cassis aromas. Summer raspberry and blackberry flavors coat the palate and luxurious blueberry jam flesh out on the long, expansive finish. This lovely Claret is lithe and playful, but manages to maintain a weighty seriousness. The black licorice, allspice, and plum notes persist on the finish tempting the taster for another glass.

– Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot 7% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot
Alcohol: 14.9%
Bottled: July 2019
Release: December 2019
Production: 1,723 cases