

2016 CLIFF LEDE HIGH FIDELITY, NAPA VALLEY

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

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 Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon in this blend is from our Twin Peaks estate vineyard, while the Cabernet Franc hails from acclaimed viticulturist David Abreu's Madrona Ranch. The vineyards are farmed with meticulous attention to detail, maintaining yields at sparse levels—ranging from two to three tons per acre. The wine is composed of just a few of our best lots from these most cherished sites.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours. The freshly-harvested fruit immediately underwent rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, which included our cutting-edge optical sorter. Whole berries were gently delivered by gravity to tank using our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately seven days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, pumpovers, and punchdowns. Extended maceration ranging from four to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, allowing us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 85% of which was new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

The lavish and exuberant 2016 High Fidelity is resplendent in aromas of black licorice, crushed red currants, tobacco, and white chocolate. While there are layers upon layers of black fig, black cherry, and warm plum flavors, there's also a core of savory grilled steak and black truffle notes that reveal itself with time. A "bouquet garni" of thyme, bay leaf, and sage lends subtle hints of savory herbs. Ultra fine and precise, the cashmere-like tannins lend the wine an ethereal and exhilaratingly long, polished finish that goes on seemingly forever.

Analysis

Composition: 51% Cabernet Franc, 34% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol: 15%
Production: 938 cases
Bottling Date: July 2018
Release Date: February 2019