

2017 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 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 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 Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon in this blend are 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

Both grace and power define the 2017 High Fidelity and its youthful exuberance will charm the taster, as well. The Cabernet Franc leads the aromas with a procession of fresh tobacco leaves, white chocolate, fig paste, and black cherries. Close behind are the melted licorice, black currants, and sous-bois aromas. Full bodied and complete, the bouquet notes are echoed on the palate and the wine finishes with a dark and long lasting expression with remarkably fine tannin for the vintage.

Analysis

Composition: 48% Cabernet Franc, 43% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alcohol: 15.2%
Production: 1,153 cases
Bottling Date: July 2019
Release Date: February 2020