

2018 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2018 vintage was a glorious year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by steady spring weather during flowering, allowing for an even and generous fruit set. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days and cool nights, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. The wine shows exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure. Optimal ripeness was achieved thanks to an early autumn of consistently warm, but not hot, days. The pristine ripening conditions allowed for very intense fruit flavor concentrations.

Vineyards

Our Sauvignon Blanc is a lively, yet elegant, expression of this varietal in Napa Valley. The primary vineyard source, located in eastern Rutherford, is home to old vines planted to a heritage Musqué clone and Sémillon, providing density, richness, and citrus notes. Two other old-vine vineyards, both in Calistoga, contribute to the blend, one planted to Sauvignon Blanc and the other to Sémillon. In addition, we include grapes from a cooler climate vineyard on the east side of Napa, imparting vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. A vineyard in Chiles Valley, a small pocket in eastern Napa County, adds complexity with old vines of Sauvignon Vert planted in 1947. This year marks the second harvest of our fabulous young vines from our property in Calistoga. The estate grown Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Musqué add sumptuous floral notes and mouthwatering acidity to the blend.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-harvested in the cool darkness of night and arrived at the winery at dawn. The grapes were then held in controlled conditions of low oxygen and cold temperatures. Our fruit underwent gentle, whole-cluster pressing which releases the delicate, prized juices from the clusters and creates a deeper level of complexity. The juice was fermented in 67% French oak barrels, 29% stainless steel tanks, and 4% concrete eggs. All fermentations were conducted at cold temperatures to preserve the freshness of the fruit. Upon reaching dryness, the wine was aged on its lees and underwent daily or weekly *battonage*.

Winemaker Notes

Born in the glorious 2018 vintage, this year's Sauvignon Blanc is a revelrous elixir that flourishes a multitudinous array of citrus tinged aromas and flavors. The exceedingly seductive perfume of orange blossom, pink fleshed grapefruit, and warm lemon soufflé entices, whilst restorative verdant notes ascend out of the glass and meld with hints of lemon verbena, tarragon, and ginger. The entrance boasts a brace of lemon candy across the palate followed by an unraveling of lemon meringue, tangerine marmalade, and lychee flavors. With air the wine further complexes and is punctuated by plump apricots, toasted brioche, and crushed chalk. This fun, sexy, and smart wine is imbued with a delightfully bright acidity and a long, rich full-bodied texture.

Analysis

Composition: 87% Sauvignon Blanc, 10% Sémillon, 3% Sauvignon Vert

Alcohol: 14.2%

Production: 10,420 cases

Bottling Date: March 2019

Release Date: April 2019