

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2016 Cliff Lede “Poetry” Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. 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

The 2016 growing season represented a continuation 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.

Vineyard

The Poetry Vineyard, carved into a steep west-facing hillside, reaches from the highest elevations of the Stags Leap District appellation to the valley floor. This vineyard draws its uniqueness from shallow, volcanic soils atop fractured shale. Due to the stressful nature of the site, planted with high vine density and farmed to very low yields, the vines develop slowly and produce small flavorful berries. The vineyard was designed by David Abreu and planted to legendary, proprietary heritage selections of Cabernet Sauvignon.

Winemaking

In the cool darkness of night, grapes were hand-picked into twenty-five pound bins to minimize crushing. By early morning, the grapes were subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, which includes our cutting edge optical sorter and a slow, individual berry hand sort. The fruit was gently gravity-delivered to small tanks by our unique crane system, which kept the berries intact. Cold soaks lasted from five to eight days, and fermentations were managed through a combination of pump overs and *délestage*. Extended maceration of up to six weeks ensured exceptional extraction and fine-tuning of tannin profiles. Following twenty-one months of *élevage* in French oak barrels, 81% of which were new.

Winemaker Notes

This is the highest expression of our Stags Leap District estate vineyard and all of its irresistible components are well apportioned and fabulously integrated even at such a young age. Dense and brooding on opening, with time liquefied rocks, warm plum, black licorice, bay leaf, and sage soar from the first glass. Equal parts black currant and summer fig flavors coalesce on the expansive entry, while smoked cardamom and lavender aromas saturate the olfactory in a glorious cornucopia of ambrosial harmony. The voluptuous palate finishes with a wave of ultrafine tannins that unites for a seamless finale of gorgeous violet perfume. -Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc, 6% Merlot, and 2% Petit Verdot
Bottling Date: July 2018
Release Date: September 2019
Production: 993 cases