

2017 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, CALISTOGA

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 by 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

Located at the base of Diamond Mountain in the western portion of the Calistoga appellation, our Calistoga estate vineyard has twenty acres planted mostly to Cabernet Sauvignon. The gravelly loam soils are volcanic in origin with alluvial influence made evident by copious amounts of water-rolled gravel and large cobbles. While Calistoga can experience quite hot daytime temperatures, our estate is protected from the afternoon sun by Diamond Mountain to our west. Cool breezes from the Pacific are drawn in by the narrow gap between Napa and Sonoma Counties, further mediating the hot days. The result is powerful, rich Cabernet with balanced acidity.

Winemaking

Hand harvested in the cool dark of night, the fruit was brought to the winery and subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, including our cutting edge optical sorter, with a goal of eliminating less-than-perfect berries. The selected fruit was gently delivered to tank via gravity by our crane system, retaining perfect, whole berries. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed by a combination of *délestage* and pump overs. Extended maceration, ranging from three to four weeks, fine-tuned tannin profiles, allowing us to build structure and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 89% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

A brilliant wine in a tough vintage, 2017 Calistoga Cabernet Sauvignon speaks to its gravelly terroir of ancient creek bed. The nose is filled with wet rock and rolled stone notes and is framed by classic spiced cassis and graphite aromas. Violets complete the nose whilst the entry graces the palate with spice laden blackberries, roses, and lavender flavors. Deep and fresh, the palate glides expansively tempting the taster with heavenly black truffle and freshly cracked pepper. Although fully formed and joyous in its youth, this young beauty will no doubt gain with time. — Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition:	93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot
Alcohol:	14.6%
Bottling Date:	July 2019
Release Date:	October 2020
Production:	560 Cases