

2017 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, DIAMOND MOUNTAIN

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

Our Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon comes from exceptional, low-yielding vineyards with volcanic ash and gravelly loam soils in the Diamond Mountain appellation, nestled in the Mayacamas Range on the northwest side of Napa Valley. The sun-drenched mountain vineyards have late afternoon breezes that ripen the fruit slowly and evenly. Both sites are planted to extraordinary old vines on a steep incline with historic Napa field selections which produce age-worthy Cabernet Sauvignon with dark fruit, intense structure, minerality, and perfume.

Winemaking

Hand harvested in the cool early morning hours, the fruit was immediately 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 berries were gently gravity-delivered to tank using our distinctive crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted five days and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, punch downs, and pump overs. Extended maceration for four weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles. The wine underwent twenty-one months of *élevage* in French oak barrels.

Winemaker Notes

The 2017 Diamond Mountain is a special elixir, akin to a fine perfume. Incredibly dark and brooding, the explosive aromatics offer up blueberry liquor, juniper, pine, and loamy gravel. The full-bodied mouthfeel is filled with decadent chocolate ganache, fig jam, tobacco, tar, and minerals. The succulent and savory finish is a heavenly fresh and mouthwatering experience that crescendos with generous amounts of sweet tannin and extract. – Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Analysis

Composition: 93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol: 14.8%
Bottling Date: July 2019
Release Date: December 2020
Production: 372 cases