

2017 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL 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 heat waves, 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

Exceptional high-elevation vineyards in the Howell Mountain appellation produce intensely concentrated grapes for this wine. Soils are volcanic in origin and consist of two main types: the first is decomposed volcanic ash called tufa, and the second is red volcanic rock and clay that is high in iron. Both are nutrient poor, which stresses the vines, producing intense and structured wines from small clusters and berries. The altitude, climate, and soils combine to create a classic mountain Cabernet Sauvignon with incredible concentration, texture, and structure.

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 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, 65% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

Youthful and accessible, 2017 Howell Mountain leaps from the glass with ripe currant, pine forest fragrance, and dark chocolate shavings. Blood orange, nori, and savory bone broth flavors wrap around the summer plum, blackberry, and fig fruits inherent on the palate. Finishing long and harmoniously, the depth of this wine is accented with cooling bay laurel and sage aromas carried out with soft integrated tannins. -

Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

Composition:	100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alcohol:	14.5%
Bottling Date:	July 2019
Release Date:	October 2020
Production:	353 cases