

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2017 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 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 with 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.

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, 74% of which were new, the blend was selected from our best lots of the Poetry Vineyard.

Winemaker Notes

The fascinatingly mosaic 2017 Poetry possesses a deep garnet color and is front-loaded with crushed black currants, warm slate, violets and Luxardo cherry aromas. Elegant and lithe flavors composed of fruitcake, bone broth, earthy truffle, and vanilla bean intermix with black cardamom and cumin spices. An extraordinarily velvety texture pulses with notes of rainier cherry, espresso roast, molasses, paprika, and hoisin. The remarkable finish is layered with unsmoked cigar, new cast iron, and melted black licorice aromas. This is a triumph of the vintage and should age gracefully for 20 years or more.

Analysis

Composition: 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cabernet Franc, 1% Merlot, and 4% Petit Verdot
Bottling Date: July 2019
Release Date: September 2020
Production: 863 cases