

2018 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, DIAMOND MOUNTAIN

Vintage

The 2018 vintage was a glorious growing year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by steady spring weather during flowering, allowing for an even and generous fruit set. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days and cool nights, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. Optimal ripeness was achieved thanks to an early autumn of consistently warm, but not hot, days. The pristine ripening conditions allowed for very intense fruit flavor concentrations. The wines show exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure.

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 pumpovers. 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 purple-ruby colored 2018 Diamond Mountain is fragrant and beautifully defined on the nose with macerated dark cherries, lilacs, mint, juniper, and minerals. Seductive kirsch, plum, and blueberry flavors glide along the palate with notes of cedar, duck fat, hazelnut, and cigar wrapper. This wine is creamy textured, yet fresh, long, and delicious. The fine-grained tannins will help guide this young wine through the long life ahead of it. – Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition: 98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Merlot
Alcohol: 14.9%
Bottling Date: July 2020
Release Date: December 2021
Production: 728 cases