

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

NAPA VALLEY

2018 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL 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

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, 35% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

The inky dark 2018 Howell Mountain's aromas and flavors echo its lofty terroir with an extravagant display of pine forest floor, bay laurel leaf, and California buckeye flower fragrance. Gobs of cassis, dark chocolate shavings, warm fig, and plum flavors form the captivating fruitier elements and nori wrapper, bone broth, and wild chanterelle mushroom flavors lay beneath. Seamlessly integrated, with fresh acidity, fine grained tannins, this elixir will drink well in its youth, yet last a lifetime. - Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Composition:	91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol:	15.4%
Bottling Date:	July 2020
Release Date:	October 2021
Production:	784 cases