

## 2018 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, NAPA VALLEY

### 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

The Bordeaux varietal grapes in our Claret blend are sourced from our estate Twin Peaks Vineyard in the Stags Leap District and a few of our valued grower partners within Napa Valley. The wine is composed of small batches from a variety of blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected rootstocks and clones. Yields are maintained at sparse levels, with a focus on canopy management and vine balance. The resulting blend boasts remarkable depth and complexity.

### Winemaking

The grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours, and immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered hand sorting process. The whole berries were gently gravity-delivered to tank by our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, pumpovers, and punch downs. Extended maceration, ranging from three to four weeks, fine-tuned our tannin profiles, allowing us to build mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak, for twenty-one months.

### Winemaker Notes

The 2018 Claret showcases all the deep, lush accessibility of the vintage. Its attractive perfume scents the glass with violets, blueberries, and warm marionberries. The entry is full of appetizing and concentrated black cherries, warm red licorice, and wild raspberries. The lovely balance inherent in this claret is framed by lavender, cinnamon, cumin, and talc notes. Coating and long, this beauty of a wine finishes with a succulent display of red apple tart, puff pastry, and lingonberry jam. – Christopher Tynan, Winemaker

### Analysis

Composition: 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Cabernet Franc, 9% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec  
Alcohol: 14.5%  
Bottled: July 2020  
Release: December 2020  
Production: 2,535 cases