

2019 CLIFF LEDE CLARET, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2019 vintage was a magnificent year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by a cool wet spring that included 3 inches of rain in May. The rain luckily didn't affect set and the weather turned warm and sunny for the duration of spring. Welcome warm nights in June, July, and August caught maturation back on schedule. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days and cool nights, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. The wines show exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure. 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.

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 around 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, maintaining 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 a mix of new and used French oak barrels, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

The spectacular 2019 Claret begins with an inviting nose of rich crème de cassis, blackberry, and warm fig aromas with a hint of the fragrant Indian spices, cardamom, and clove. The seductive and voluptuously flavored wine is laden with black cherries, preserved plums, espresso, and lavender. It's a full bodied, lush wine that expands mid-palate and finishes with a crescendo of sweet and silky tannins. —Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition: 73% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol: 14.8%
Bottled: July 2021
Release: December 2021
Production: 2,787 cases