

2019 CLIFF LEDE CROSSFADE, NAPA VALLEY

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Owner Cliff Lede, Director of Vineyard Operations Allison Wilson, and Director of Winemaking Christopher Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

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 three inches of rain in May. Luckily, the rain 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 wine shows 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 Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon in this blend are from our Stags Leap District estate vineyard, while the Cabernet Franc hails from acclaimed viticulturist David Abreu's Madrona Ranch. The vineyards are farmed with meticulous attention to detail, maintaining yields at sparse levels—ranging from two to three tons per acre. The wine is composed of just a few of our best lots from these most cherished sites.

Winemaking

Grapes were picked in the darkness of the early morning hours. The freshly-harvested fruit immediately underwent rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, which included our cutting-edge optical sorter. Whole berries were gently delivered by gravity to tank using our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately seven days, and fermentations were managed via a combination of *délestage*, pumpovers, and punchdowns. Extended maceration ranging from four to five weeks fine-tuned our tannin profiles, allowing us to perfect mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 77% of which were new, for twenty-two months.

Winemaker Notes

Deep purple colored and dark ruby edged, 2019 Crossfade's charm lies in the panoply of spices and aromas that burst from the glass. A co-fermented lot of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc plays the leading role, sending forth a whirlwind of blackberry, cigar tobacco, petrichor, dried leaves, and cassis notes. There are intense piquant notes of Calabrian chilies and roasted sweet red peppers on the entry and midpalate that turn lush and expansive. A crescendo of malted chocolate and roasted chestnut flavors ride out along the balanced finish of this unique and singular wine.

Analysis

Composition: 59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Cabernet Franc, 5% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol: 14.7%
Production: 471 cases
Bottling Date: July 2021
Release Date: February 2022