

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2021 CLIFF LEDE “CROSSFADE” RED WINE, 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 2021 growing season was beset by a very dry winter. The valley received only half of the average rainfall that traditionally falls in the winter months. Because of the winter drought, our experienced vineyard crew began irrigation before bud break in the rockiest soils and set about crafting canopies that would protect and ripen the fruit to perfection. Although dry, the mild weather during April's budbreak helped establish healthy shoot and leaf growth throughout May into June. Mid-June saw some of the hottest days of the year, but thankfully they were accompanied by cold nights which tempered their effects. Foggy mornings and warm sunny afternoons in August and September ushered in an early harvest of pristine and flavorful grapes. The wines are imbued with a bright fresh acidity provided by the ample, shading canopies, along with the ripeness and allure of a droughty growing season.

Vineyards

The Cabernet Franc in this wine hails from our prestigious Poetry Vineyard and acclaimed viticulturist David Abreu's Madrona Ranch Vineyard. Our beloved estate vineyard in Calistoga provides most of the Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend. 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, 73% of which were new, for twenty-two months.

Winemaker Notes

Intellectual charm and curiosity define the 2021 Crossfade and its youthful exuberance will excite the taster, as well. The Cabernet Franc leads the aromas with a procession of fresh tobacco leaves, white chocolate, fig paste, and black cherries. Close behind are the silky Cabernet Sauvignon's melted licorice, black currants, and mulberry aromas. Aromatically complex and complete, the bouquet notes are echoed on the palate and the wine finishes with velvety and remarkably fine tannin. – Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition: 49% Cabernet Franc, 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot
Alcohol: 14.0%
Production: 523 cases
Bottling Date: July 2023
Release Date: October 2023