

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2012 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Owner Cliff Lede, Vineyard Architect David Abreu, and Winemaker Chris Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Vintage

The 2012 vintage was a glorious year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by steady spring weather during flowering, allowing for even fruit set. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days, cool nights, and minimal heat spikes, 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. Skillful crop thinning and an early autumn of consistently warm days helped the vineyards achieve optimal ripeness.

Vineyards

The fruit was sourced from the hillside terraces of our Poetry Vineyard, as well as our Twin Peaks Vineyard estate surrounding the winery, and a few, select neighboring vineyards in the Stags Leap District. The wine is composed of small lots from our best blocks, representing a diverse range of carefully selected clones and rootstocks. From exposed, rocky terraces that are volcanic in origin, to the ancient riverbed alluvial soils, the breadth of contributing sites translates into a wine of impressive complexity.

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 specially-designed truncated tanks via gravity by our crane system, minimizing disruption of berry integrity. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed by a combination of *délestage* and pumpovers. Extended maceration ranging from three to four weeks fine-tuned tannin profiles, allowing us to build mouth feel and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 50% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

Enticing aromas of crushed blackberries and cassis are complemented by dark chocolate and grilled rib-eye. Black licorice, cocoa powder, and espresso add complexity to this opulent wine. Exceptional concentration and a rich mouthfeel create a powerful impression that finishes with polished tannins and a *Graves*-like minerality, a hallmark of Stags Leap District vineyards.

Analysis

Composition: 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Petit Verdot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec, 3% Merlot
Alcohol: 15.3%
Bottling Date: July 2014
Release Date: February 2015