

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2015 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2015 vintage was a wonderfully classic year for Napa Valley wines. A dry winter, followed by warm spring temperatures, led to an early bud break that set the stage for one of the earliest harvests on record. Crop levels were lower than average due to dry conditions and a cool weather spell during flowering. The dry soils led to low vigor vines and small berries, creating very concentrated fruit. With lovely summer weather, it was our earliest harvest on record and the red wines we produced are opulent, voluptuous wines with incredible concentration.

Vineyards

Situated on the western Oakville bench, the vaunted Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard has gravelly loam soils with high mineral content derived from sedimentary deposits of the volcanic Mayacamas Mountains and the alluvial fan of the Napa River. The vineyard has low organic matter content and thorough drainage, which devigorates the vines and produces small berries that are ideal for wines with intense concentration. The site is warm and sunny throughout the day, but cooled by late afternoon breezes, producing ripe Cabernet Sauvignon with lovely acidity. The blocks that make up our blend represent a diverse array of the Beckstoffer To Kalon terroir and clonal selection, creating a unique and extraordinary wine from this praised site.

Winemaking

In the cool darkness of night, grapes were hand-picked into twenty-five pound bins to minimize crushing. By early morning, the grapes were subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process which includes our cutting edge optical sorter, and a slow, individual berry hand sort. The fruit was gently gravity-delivered to small tanks and wooden *cuvées* by our unique crane system which kept the berries intact. Cold soaks lasted from five to eight days, and fermentations were managed through a combination of pump overs and *délestage*. Extended maceration of up to six weeks ensured exceptional extraction and fine-tuning of tannin profiles. This wine underwent twenty-one months of *élevage* in French oak barrels, 88% of which were new.

Winemaker Notes

The majesty of the To Kalon vineyard's signature aromas of violets, gravel, and dark cassis form the ambrosial scents emanating from the first pour. With time, gobs of delectable blackberry, lavender, and an earthy minerality arise and coalesce in the glass. Flavors of blueberry, marionberry preserves, warm currants, and luxardo cherries spring forth along the sultry palate. The vintage's fresh acidity carries the unctuous flavors along gracefully and the richness of the lively tannin make this a candidate for long term aging.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Production: 585 cases
Bottling Date: July 2017
Release Date: April 2018