

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2016 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2016 growing season represented a continuation of exceptional vintages in Napa Valley. Another drought year, 2016 began with a dry winter, followed by a warm, frost-free early spring with just enough rainfall to fill the soil profile, leading to an early budbreak with resources to develop healthy canopies. The vintage progressed at a leisurely pace due to moderate temperatures throughout most of the remaining growing season. Crop levels were slightly below average due to a dry late spring and a cool weather spell during flowering. The dry soils led to small berries, creating very concentrated fruit. With lovely summer weather, grapes were harvested at optimal ripeness and the resulting wines have generous fruit with intensity and vibrancy.

Vineyards

Situated on the western Oakville bench, the celebrated 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 critically 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 *cuvés* 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, 83% of which were new.

Winemaker Notes

The well drained, gravelly loam soils of western Oakville that are the source for our To Kalon Vineyard give this Cabernet's signature aromas of violets, gravel, and dark cassis. The 2016 vintage is brimming with gobs of warm currants, dark chocolate cake, lavender, and an earthy minerality, that arise and coalesce in the glass. Flavors of clove and cinnamon-spiced blackberry preserves spring forth along the sultry palate. The vintage's fresh acidity carries the unctuous flavors along enthusiastically, and the ultrafine, sensuous tannin are impossible to resist.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Production: 615 cases
Bottling Date: July 2018
Release Date: May 2019