

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2018 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2018 vintage was a glorious growing year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by steady spring weather during flowering, allowing for an even and generous fruit set. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days and cool nights, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. 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. The wines show exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure.

Vineyard

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, 92% of which were new.

Winemaker Notes

The comely perfume of the 2018 To Kalon rises effortlessly out of the glass and bursts with a flamboyant display of blackberries, violets, and a wave of sultry black cherry. The voluptuous entry of red and black licorice, Aztec chocolate, and black currants is imbued with spice notes of ancho chile, smoked cardamom, and cumin. This fully integrated and well-proportioned Cabernet has a seamless and fabulously complex finish offering up liquid mineral and loam notes that echo the terroir of To Kalon. The opaque purple potable finishes deep and saturated, with a lavish multi-layered depth and personality and wave of fresh acidity.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Production: 541 cases
Bottling Date: July 2020
Release Date: May 2021