

2021 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

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 white 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

Our Sauvignon Blanc is a lively, yet elegant, expression of this varietal in Napa Valley. The primary vineyard source, located in eastern Rutherford, is home to old vines planted to a heritage Musqué clone and Sémillon, providing density, richness, and citrus notes. Two other old-vine vineyards, both in Calistoga, contribute to the blend, one planted to Sauvignon Blanc and the other to Sémillon. A vineyard in Chiles Valley, a small pocket in eastern Napa County, adds complexity with a few tons of Sauvignon Vert. This year marks the fourth harvest of our fabulous young vines from our property in Calistoga. The estate grown Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Musqué add sumptuous floral notes and mouthwatering acidity to the blend.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-harvested in the cool darkness of night and arrived at the winery at dawn. The grapes were then held in controlled conditions of low oxygen and cold temperatures. Our fruit underwent gentle, whole-cluster pressing which released the delicate, prized juices from the clusters and created a deeper level of complexity. The juice was fermented in 92% French oak barrels, 6% stainless steel tanks, and 2% concrete eggs. All fermentations were conducted at cold temperatures to preserve the freshness of the fruit. Upon reaching dryness, the wine was aged on its lees and select lots underwent occasional *battonage*.

Winemaker Notes

Youthful and delightfully fresh, the 2021 Sauvignon Blanc offers an exhilarating bouquet of lemon curd, honeysuckle nectar, and white peach aromas. Layers of shortbread, beeswax, flint, and kaffir lime scents appear with time and heighten the complexity. The entry begins seductively taut, but soon widens, expansively coating the palate without losing precision. Lemon candy, clementine, and quince paste flavors gush harmoniously while sea spray, chamomile, and rosemary flowers dot the retro nasal recesses. This cerebral wine finishes long with touches of wet pebbles, lanolin, and tangy marmalade notes dancing in the seamless layers. — Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition: 91% Sauvignon Blanc, 9% Sémillon, 1% Sauvignon Vert

Alcohol: 13.6%

Production: 6,299 cases

Bottling Date: March 2022

Release Date: April 2022