

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2021 CLIFF LEDE “RHYTHM” CABERNET SAUVIGNON, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

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 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

The Rhythm Vineyard is located on the subtle slopes of our Stags Leap District estate. Defined by two large hills at its southern border, this vineyard surrounds our winery and reaches west toward the Napa River. The Rhythm Vineyard’s soil is composed of gravelly loam of varying depths and rock content. The incredibly diverse soil profile enables us to farm several small blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon and additional Bordeaux varieties with unique combinations of clonal selections and rootstocks.

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 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, 69% of which were new.

Winemaker Notes

The inaugural vintage of Rhythm couldn’t have come in a better vintage to flaunt the greatness of the Stags Leap District. Dark purple with vermilion-tinged edges, the plush and refreshing lures the taster with a multidimensional perfume that fills the glass with notes of jasmine, lavender, and spring flowers. Interwoven into the floral notes are unctuous layers of plum, blackberry, and black currants. Loads of smoked cardamom, cinnamon, and black licorice melt on the palate where vibrant acidity carries the long finish to a state of balance and equilibrium. – Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition:	86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Petit Verdot, 5% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc
Alcohol:	14.2%
Production:	1,364 cases
Bottling Date:	July 2023
Release Date:	February 2024