

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2021 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, RUTHERFORD

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 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

An exceptional benchland vineyard in the Rutherford appellation produces intensely concentrated grapes for this wine. Planted at the foot of a steep canyon on the western hills of Rutherford, the rocky and loamy soils were formed by eons of erosion from the mountains above. The aspect, climate, and soils combine to create a classic Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon with incredible concentration, texture, and structure.

Winemaking

Hand harvested in the cool early morning hours, the fruit was immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, including our cutting-edge optical sorter, with a goal of eliminating less-than-perfect berries. The selected fruit was gently delivered to tank via gravity by our crane system, retaining perfect, whole berries. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed by a combination of *délestage* and pump overs. Extended maceration, ranging from three to four weeks, fine-tuned tannin profiles, allowing us to build structure and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 79% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

The ravishing inky purple 2021 Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon is a seductive and complex tincture where a panoply of dusty cassis, pine forest, black tea, loamy, and cedar aromas playfully dance in the glass. Layers of blackberry, mulberries, and cinnamon notes lay out on top of the bouquet. The long and decadent mouthfeel is guided along the palate by fresh acidity and gobs of chocolaty tannins provide an enticing structure. Lingering notes of ancho chile, cumin, and Chinese five spice persist long after tasting. - Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition:	100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alcohol:	13.2%
Production:	587 cases
Bottling Date:	July 2023
Release Date:	October 2023