

2019 CLIFF LEDE SAUVIGNON BLANC, NAPA VALLEY

Vintage

The 2019 vintage was a magnificent year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by a cool wet spring that included 3 inches of rain in May. The rain luckily didn't affect set and the weather turned warm and sunny for the duration of spring. Welcome warm nights in June, July, and August caught maturation back on schedule. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days and cool nights, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. The wine shows exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure. 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.

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. In addition, we include grapes from a cooler climate vineyard on the east side of Napa, imparting vibrant acidity and finesse to the wine. A vineyard in Chiles Valley, a small pocket in eastern Napa County, adds complexity with old vines of Sauvignon Vert planted in 1947. This year marks the second 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 releases the delicate, prized juices from the clusters and creates a deeper level of complexity. The juice was fermented in 68% French oak barrels, 30% 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 underwent daily or weekly *battonage*.

Winemaker Notes

The elegant and lively 2019 Sauvignon Blanc opens with a feast of ambrosial lemon curd, elderflower, bosc pear flesh, and apricots aromas. There is also delightful array of toasty brioche, coconut, and orange blossom notes reveling amongst the upper register. A beautifully bright acidity leads the entry with a nectar of citrusy key lime and grapefruit, followed nicely with pineapple, and honeydew melon flavors. The grand finish flourishes with pleasurable hints of marzipan, oyster shell, honeycrisp apple, fresh mint, and green tea.

Analysis

Composition: 85% Sauvignon Blanc, 12% Sémillon, 3% Sauvignon Vert

Alcohol: 14.1%

Production: 9,980 cases

Bottling Date: March 2020

Release Date: August 2020

Accolades

93 Points, *Wine Enthusiast*