

CLIFF LEDE

VINEYARDS

2021 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, OAKVILLE

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 vineyard in the Oakville appellation produces intensely concentrated grapes for this wine. Planted on the southeast border of Oakville, this extremely rocky vineyard's soil is composed of stones made round by the weathering of Rector Creek's stream over the millennia. The poor stony soils restrict vine vigor and allow the vines to only produce small berries inherent with incredible concentration. The heat retained by these rocky soils helps ripen the clusters and lend a silky lush texture to the tannins and finish.

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, 68% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

Winemaker Notes

The east side of Oakville is unmatched for producing seductive, cassis-laden wines of density and richness, so it only follows that our 2021 should flaunt these characteristics. Layers of blackberry, jammy blackcurrants, and warm summer mulberry flavors will delight the taster. Accents of cumin and smoked paprika intertwine with red and black licorice notes. There are gobs of sweet, creamy tannins that lead to a long finish with focus and intensity. - Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

Analysis

Composition:	97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Merlot
Alcohol:	14.0%
Bottling Date:	July 2023
Release Date:	December 2023
Production:	780 cases