



2018 Vine Cliff Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Established in 1871 and noted as the premier Napa Valley winery, Vine Cliff Vineyard and Winery was resurrected from ghost winery status by the Sweeney family in the 1980s. Vine Cliff Winery produces limited quantities of ultra-premium, estate grown Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay from Oakville AVA and Los Carneros AVA respectively. Vine Cliff Vineyard encompasses a hundred acre estate with various elevations and terraced slope orientations that range from valley floor to a bench vineyard at 680 feet elevation. Our wines are reflective of our unique and highly acclaimed terroir and made in a balanced style with layer upon layer of subtlety and complexity.

WINE PROFILE: Gentle fruit handling, small lot fermentations, and attention to quality are the rule for producing great Cabernet at Vine Cliff. Our grapes are hand-picked at night or in the early morning to give us cold fruit for processing. Careful winemaking, gentle techniques, and limited processing all contribute to wines that express the terroir of the Vine Cliff Estate.

TASTING NOTES: The 2018 Vine Cliff Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is a polished, yet brooding wine, with a deep garnet hue from layers of rich fruit.

On the nose, aromatics of black cherry, briar, anise, sweet pipe tobacco, dark chocolate, and brined black olives; intermingle with hints of dried green herbs and sweet oak.

On the palate, fine grained tannins give way to a silky and rich texture; balanced with dark black fruits of black cherry and cassis, blackberries, Satsuma plum, black tea, and mint. The wine finishes up with a bright ribbon of red raspberry.

VINTAGE NOTES: "February saw abundant rains, followed by lots of filtered light in spring and early summer. Both bud break and flowering occurred a bit late, but under ideal weather conditions, creating plentiful and even fruit set. Summer brought generous sun during the day and cooler marine influences, virtually uninterrupted by major heat spikes. The relatively mild summer followed by extended fall sunshine and moderate heat created near-ideal conditions for winemakers to allow their fruit to accumulate flavor complexity with gradual increases in sugar levels. Volume is looking great, up 20-30% increase over average crop quantity".

VINEYARD NOTES: The Oakville Estate vineyard is essentially two different vineyards. The lower blocks are terraced into steep canyon walls layered in volcanic Andesite and Rhyolite rocks. These terrace contours provide complexity from the various orientations that face southeast, south, southwest and west. The upper blocks are planted on the Oakville Bench, a gentle sundrenched slope of red clay loam at 680' in elevation. The five Cabernet Sauvignon clones planted provide another layer of complexity to our wines, with 38% of the fruit came from the Oakville Bench blocks with the remaining 62% was from the Terraced levels facing North.

SOIL: Volcanic origin Boomer gravelly loam **ELEVATION:** 280'-680'

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Malbec, and 3% Cabernet Franc; all from our Oakville Estate.

FERMENTATION PROTOCOL: Individual vineyard blocks are destemmed separately into small stainless steel fermentation tanks and barrels. Grapes are cold soaked before the must is warmed and the fermentation initiated. Small berries coupled with low juice to skin ratios gave us bright ripe flavor and rich tannin concentration in 2017. Individual vineyard blocks are fermented and aged separately.

COOPERAGE COMPOSITION: 70% new French Oak from coopers Darnajou, Seguin Moreau, Nadalie, and Treuil.

BARREL AGING: 20 months **PH:** 3.78 **TA:** 5.70 **AVE. BRIX:** 28.0 **ABV:** 14.7%

PRODUCTION QUANTITY: 515 cases



JAMES SUCKLING.COM 93

(Publ. December 2020)

Robert Parker 90
WINE ADVOCATE

(Publ. November 2020)