



CLIFF LEDE VINEYARDS/POETRY INN

Situation Analysis

In 2002, Canadian businessman Cliff Lede purchased the S. Anderson Vineyard sparkling wine property in the Stags Leap District. With a passion for Bordeaux varieties and a background in construction development, Lede would soon rename the property to Cliff Lede (pronounced “lady”) Vineyards, focus on Bordeaux varieties and cease production of sparkling wines. In addition, Lede built a new tasting room (June 2004), opened the luxury Poetry Inn (May 2005), transformed the old fermentation room into The Gallery at Cliff Lede Vineyards (June 2005) and finalized construction on a new cave system and state-of-the art winemaking facility (harvest 2005). Michelle Edwards, formerly of Colgin Cellars, was hired as winemaker in late 2004, vineyard manager David Abreu took control of the vineyards in August 2004, and winemaking consultant-to-the-stars Michel Rolland joined the team as a consultant in May 2005. In early 2010, Michelle Edwards left Cliff Lede Vineyards to become a full-time mother, and Philippe Melka was brought in as winemaking consultant.

With Cliff’s commitment to excellence, the constant construction activity and openings, new wines being released, new brands to launch, as well as high profile members of the winemaking and viticultural team to promote, Charlotte Milan needed to generate A-list, consistent media results that would brand Cliff Lede Vineyards, launch the Cliff Lede and Poetry brands, promote the Poetry Inn and Gallery, while ensuring that Cliff Lede’s wine story remained in the forefront.

Strategy/Tactics/Solution

Milan developed and implemented a comprehensive media relations strategy for the wine company that emphasized Cliff’s commitment to Napa and the winery and promoted the team he had assembled. Developing key messages for the media, Milan media trained all spokespeople. She determined goals for media placements, which included coverage and reviews of the wines, coverage of the wines in both traditional wine and lifestyle media, as well as travel features on Poetry Inn, coverage on Cliff Lede Vineyards as a destination, as well as press on promotional programs the new Gallery at Cliff Lede

Vineyards.

Through one-on-one media visits to the new tasting room, caves, Poetry Inn, Gallery and new winemaking facility and interviews with Cliff, the general manager, and winemaking team, Milan delivered regular and consistent media results which were timed to coincide with the launch of new initiatives and openings, as well as to provide a steady stream of press coverage so that Cliff Lede Vineyards stayed top-of-mind with consumers, distributors, wine buyers and the media.

Tactics included aggressive and proactive media relations and the creation of several innovative programs over the seven years Milan and her team have worked for Cliff Lede Vineyards. For example, Milan developed a \$20K/couple BYOB program at Cliff Lede Vineyards and the Poetry Inn. From 2005 to the present date, the program has generated approximately 30 placements (*Departures*, *Newsweek*, *Robb Report* and *Celebrated Living*) and has had scores of imitators.

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Results

- Coverage of Cliff Lede Vineyards rapidly increased and has remained high. Since October 2002, Milan has secured approximately **400 print placements** for Cliff Lede Vineyards and Poetry Inn as well as radio and TV coverage.
- The coverage has consistently been positive and has met the goals Milan and Lede set out to achieve.
- Sales of Cliff Lede wines have increased dramatically; most wines are sold out for 6 months; the flagship Poetry sells out upon release to the mailing list; brand recognition is high for a still relatively new wine brand.
- The Poetry in is consistently sold out.

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