

# CIRCLE OF LIFE

## WHITE 2016

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### IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Circle of Life tells the story of Waterkloof: A once conventionally farmed vineyard with great potential, that - since Paul Boutinot took over the property - has been transformed into a living, breathing organic and biodynamic vineyard by Farm Manager Christiaan Loots and his team.

At Waterkloof we strive to produce balanced, characterful wines by adhering to traditional organic and biodynamic methods. Chickens, sheep and work-horses all play their own unique role in the vineyards. Our soils are free of chemicals and are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own organic compost. We do not fight nature, we harness it.

Our focus has always been to get a better understanding of Waterkloof and the individual characters of its vineyard blocks. The Circumstance range allows these individual blocks and varieties to be expressed. Conversely, our objective with Circle of Life has been to produce two blends that encapsulate all the varying terroir characteristics and grape varieties found on Waterkloof. Thus, rather than being constrained by a traditional blending style, for example a Bordeaux or Rhône blend, we have instead produced two wines that are not driven by varietal, nor a specific parcel of the vineyard. Instead, they are a true reflection of the totality, philosophy and specificity of Waterkloof.

### A GENTLE HAND

We mainly rely on tasting, to determine the optimum flavour development of the grapes. Bunches are picked early in the mornings, when they are still cool, which helps to preserve the flavours. Extracting juice from the grapes is achieved through whole-bunch pressing in our modern basket press. This is the most delicate way to extract the juice.

After a settling period of 24 hours, a large proportion of the juice was destined for co-fermentation. We determined a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc prior to fermentation which went into old 600 litre barrels as well as concrete eggs. Ultimately, this allowed for a better integrated and more complete end product. After a very long, natural yeast fermentation of eight months, the wine was left on the primary lees for an extended period before bottling. This helped to add more complexity and weight to the palate. The wine was then racked to fermentation tank and the final blend was made up, with the addition of extra Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Semillon. The wine then underwent an extended period of bottle ageing before release. We produce the wine as naturally as possible, with no additions of acids or enzymes. The final blend is 67% Sauvignon Blanc, 29% Chenin Blanc and 4% Semillon.

### AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2015/16 GROWING SEASON

The Cape did not experience a very cold winter in 2015, with near perfect days lingering at 20°C. The evenings were cold but not excessively so. We also experienced the driest winter to date with half the normal rainfall.

Budburst took place at the beginning of September, which was definitely earlier than usual. It was a proper spring with lots of sun and warm temperatures.

We started picking a week earlier than last year (which was already early). A lot of the producers were significantly down on crop yield (some even up to 50%). Fortunately, our biodynamic vines have a deep root system (approximately six metres deep), compared to conventional vineyards (digging only one meter deep) and we were not down on yield by too much.

With the berries being very small this year the flavours were fantastic. Some raisins still developed on the later varieties, which we got rid of in the cellar. The skins on the reds were thicker than normal but brimming with concentration.

### **A TASTING NOTE FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD**

The Sauvignon Blanc aromas are prominent on the nose, with beautiful lime and prickly pear notes showing off. Intense flavours, with great balance. A tight mineral core and creamy mid palate from the Chenin Blanc allows for great complexity and a persistent finish. The Sauvignon Blanc lends lovely, fresh acidity to the wine.

### **THE NUMBERS (45 600 BOTTLES PRODUCED)**

Alc: 13.4%

RS: 3.6 g/l

TA: 5.2 g/l

pH: 3.3