

# CIRCUMSTANCE

## CABERNET FRANC 2018



### IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Cabernet Franc is the original “Cabernet” grape, being one of the parents of Cabernet Sauvignon (a cross between Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc). This varietal ripens earlier than Cabernet Sauvignon, which makes it ideal for the cool slopes of the Helderberg region.

The vines are grown on south-west facing slopes of the Schapenberg, Somerset West. The farm is a mere 4km from the Atlantic Ocean, with vines planted at a height of between 240 and 260 meters above sea level. The soils are of decomposed granite origin with medium sized stones, helping with both drainage and moisture retention. Strong south-easterly winds occur during the growing season, which helps to control growth and crop size. Production was approximately 4 tons/ha. In other words, packed full of flavour!

At Waterkloof, we do not spray herbicides, fungicides or pesticides in our vineyards. We produce our own compost and biodynamic preparations, which we then disperse into the soil by utilising our horses as opposed to heavy tractors. This ensures soil with more life, where the vine can spread its roots as it pleases, taking up everything it needs from this complex soil. The result is honest, terroir-driven wines – a true reflection of our unique vineyard site.

### A GENTLE HAND

We harvest according to taste and spend a lot of time in the vineyards to see how the flavours develop. All our grapes are hand-picked, cooled overnight and then processed the following morning. We are always trying ‘new’ or shall we say... old, traditional approaches, that is why, after beginning to work with whole-bunches for our Rhone varietals in 2009, we now do the same with Cabernet Franc. Bunches are hand-sorted so that only the best grapes are then placed into wooden fermenters via our winery’s gravity-flow system. The alcoholic fermentation started spontaneously with the natural yeasts found in our chemical-free vineyards.

Punch downs during the fermentation process took place twice a day. First by feet and then at the end of fermentation, with a soft punch-down machine to ensure a moderate extraction of colour and tannin. The wine spent a total of around 30 days on the skins to help integrate the tannins. The skins were separated from the juice via gravity-flow and then gently pressed in a basket press. All the wine went through malo-lactic fermentation in about 11 % new oak and the rest in 2nd and 3rd fill French barrels and was then aged for 32 months. We make the wine as naturally and untamed as possible, with no additions of acids or enzymes.

### AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2017/2018 GROWING SEASON

The Cape experienced a very dry growing season from the end of the 2017 harvest and also during the beginning of 2018. The 2017 winter was not exceptionally cold but still colder than the previous three years, which helped to ensure an even budburst. The rainfall was the lowest that we have experienced in the last 10 years on the farm.

Budburst started earlier than usual seeing that the winter was not very cold. We could see some of the first buds appear early in September. From there on the vines were struggling to grow due to the dry conditions and veraison only took place in early January. The dam levels were also low and we were only able to irrigate the younger blocks. The best practice during dry conditions is to always have a complete weed-free vineyard to prevent excessive water usage and to limit stress on the vine by suckering if needed- sometimes this also happens naturally.

In early January we did receive rain and also a bit in early February. We believe that this was the saving grace for our vines to help them ripen the fruit more evenly. During this time, we did not see excessive heat spikes and had lovely cool evenings which helped to have a longer growing season and have all the flavours develop over a longer period.

Harvest started about 10 days later than in 2017. We saw a decrease in berry size on some blocks. Fortunately, little to no rot was found on the grapes, which helped to have a stress-free sorting table. Overall, we are more than happy with the quality of the 2018 harvest.

## A TASTING FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA LANGENEGGER

Intriguing Cape fynbos notes can be enjoyed on the nose, with some beautiful spice and notes of plums. I enjoy swirling this wine in my glass to see how it evolves. It has great structure with a fresh acidity. I enjoy pairing it with a marinated rack of lamb in a variety of different herbs (such as parsley and thyme) and some garlic.

## THE NUMBERS (15 600 bottles produced)

Alc: 13.5%

TA: 5.1 g/l

pH: 3.59

RS: 1.8 g/l