

CIRCUMSTANCE

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2018



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

A cross between Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon is the most famous red wine grape in the world and is celebrated as the king of the reds because of its great structure. With its small, thick-skinned berries, it is rich in colour and tannins.

The block used for our Circumstance Cabernet Sauvignon is on the north-west facing slopes of the Schapenberg, at an altitude of about 270 and 300m above sea level and a mere 5 kilometres from the Atlantic Ocean. Strong south-easterly winds help control growth and crop yield. Soils are of decomposed granite origin with fine sand/loam topsoil and medium-size stones, helping with both drainage and moisture retention. Production was approximately 4 tons/ha.

At Waterkloof we pride ourselves in not spraying any chemical herbicides or pesticides in our vineyards. We produce our own compost and biodynamic preparations, which we then distribute by utilising our draught horses, as opposed to heavy tractors. These practices ensure loose soil with more life, where the vines can spread their roots as they please; taking up everything they need from our rich and complex earth. We believe that biodynamic farming helps to produce honest, terroir-driven wines that are truly made in the vineyard.

A GENTLE HAND

We harvest according to taste and spend a lot of our time in the vineyards to see how the flavours develop. Grapes were destemmed, hand sorted and placed into our open-top wooden fermenters via gravity. The natural fermentation started spontaneously- utilising the wild yeasts present on the fruit.

Punch downs (twice daily) were used during fermentation to ensure a soft and slow colour and tannin extraction. The wines spent 30 days on the skins to help integrate the tannins and stabilise the colour. The skins were separated from the juice via gravity flow and gently pressed in a basket press. The wine went through malolactic fermentation in barrel and was then aged in new (11%), second and third fill (89%) French barrels for 28 months.

We never fine any of our reds so that the grapes are honestly and purely expressed in the wine. Only sulphur was added and no other additions, such as tartaric acid or enzymes, were allowed.

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2018/2019 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

A distinct cooler climate Cabernet Sauvignon with hints of dark fruit, black pepper and even some dark chocolate. The palate shows good structure with superbly refined tannins and great length. Our Circumstance Cabernet Sauvignon is a perfect companion for a variety of dishes such as T-bone steak on the braai (barbecue) or slow-cooked lamb shanks.

THE NUMBERS (8 600 bottles produced)

Alc: 14 %

TA: 5 g/l

pH: 3.63

RS: 2.2 g/l