

CIRCUMSTANCE

MOURVÈDRE 2020



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Originally from Spain and named after the Spanish city, Murviedro, Mourvèdre is known as the signature varietal in France's Bandol region and also used in the Languedoc and Southern Rhône as part of their red blends.

It is a later ripening variety that enjoys dry, warm and sunny conditions. For this reason, our Mourvèdre is planted as bush vines to harness the heat units from the earth, when temperatures drop in the evenings. It is also a wind-resistant vine, therefore it is unnecessary for us to give them trellis support, as we do with our windswept Sauvignon blanc vines, for example.

We use organic and regenerative methods and adhere to Old World, sustainable practices in our vineyards to ensure that the vines are nourished and in balance. Our soils are free of chemicals and are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own organic compost.

The two single vineyard blocks are approximately four kilometers from the sea and are planted at a height of between 270 and 300 meters above sea level. The soils are of sandstone origin with medium sized stones, helping with drainage. The yield for this vintage was on average just 2 tonnes per hectare.

A GENTLE HAND

We follow a 'less is more', minimal intervention winemaking philosophy for all our wines and the grapes are tasted at regular intervals to determine optimal ripeness and flavour development. We pick our grapes early in the mornings, when they are still cool, which helps to preserve the flavours.

The red varietals are sorted and placed into wooden fermenters by the use of a gravity flow system. We do natural whole-bunch fermentation for all our Rhône varietals and believe that tannins should be extracted slowly and gently during the fermentation process. In order to achieve this, we stomp the grapes twice a day with our feet instead of using a machine or doing pump overs. The wine then spends roughly one month on the skins, after which it is run down via gravity and the skins are pressed in a basket press.

Malolactic fermentation also takes place naturally in barrel, without the addition of bacteria. Our Mourvèdre was aged in older 600L French barrels for about 27 months.

In keeping with our philosophy of minimum intervention, this wine was not fined and only underwent a basic filtration prior to bottling, to ensure that it can be enjoyed in its purest form.

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE – 2020/2021 GROWING SEASON

The current harvest is determined by the conditions of the previous years. With this taken into account, we could see that all of our hard work in 2018 certainly paid off in this year's harvest. The leaves were still green for more than a month after picking the grapes. We welcomed a bit of rain just after the 2018 harvest, which also helped the vine to build up some much-needed reserves.

The 2018 winter was cold and the vines could go into proper dormancy. During this time, we worked hard to build up the nutrients required in the vineyard for the summer growing period. At Waterkloof we are always tweaking the processes. One example, of many, is the deep bed system, where we put plant cuttings and manure into an area that used to be aerated by chickens scratching around. This time round, the chickens were substituted by three beautiful little pigs to dig channels into the compost to turn it. This mixture was especially beneficial during the drought, as it is a rich source of carbon that improves the water retention ability of the soils.

We experienced an even budburst during a cool spring but had a lot of wind during flowering which led to uneven berry set on some of the blocks. To help the vine ripen properly, we only kept the more developed bunches on the vine.

The summer growing season was fairly cool, except for a few warmer days in October. We were also very happy to welcome some rain in January, which accompanied by the wind, led to the soil receiving good moisture without having humidity build-up on the grapes that could cause rot.

The 2019 harvest commenced the last week of January but went into full swing from the first week of February. We picked our last grapes at the end of March. On the younger blocks, the yield was down by about 10%, but the older blocks produced more or less the same.

The whites showed a lot of concentration and vibrant acidity. With the reds, we had lovely small berries with thick skins. During processing, we once again worked gently to avoid over-extracting and let Mother Nature take her course with our natural ferments.

A TASTING NOTE FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA LANGENEGGER

Mourvedre shows a lot of variation from vintage to vintage reflecting the characteristics of the year nicely in the glass. As 2020 was a cooler year the plum and red berry notes on the wine are more prominent to me but I also smell floral notes as well as a variety of spices. On the palate the wine has a prominent tannin that coats the mouth and has a lovely length. I would be inclined to enjoy this wine with a red meat on the bone prepared over fire.

THE NUMBERS (8 000 BOTTLES PRODUCED)

Alc: 13.5 %

RS: 2

TA: 4.7

pH: 3.7

VA: 0.75