

# CIRCUMSTANCE

## SYRAH 2018



### IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Syrah is the red wine varietal that rules the Northern Rhône Valley. There are numerous myths associated with the origin of Syrah, which all add a touch of romance to the grape and today it ranks as the 6th most planted grape variety in the world. It is extremely versatile; adapts well to a wide range of regions, and expresses a true sense of terroir.

The block used for our Circumstance Syrah is planted on the south-facing slopes of the Schapenberg at an altitude of between 240 to 260 metres above sea level and a mere 4kms from the Atlantic Ocean. Strong south-easterly winds help control growth and crop yield. Our Syrah vines flourish in granite soils, just as they do in most of the Northern Rhône appellations. Production was approximately 2.5 tons/ha.

On Waterkloof we farm organic and biological, producing our own compost and microbial preparations. We then distribute these 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 regenerative farming helps to produce honest, terroir-driven wines that are truly made in the vineyard.

### A GENTLE HAND

We harvest according to taste and find it essential to 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. Grapes were not de-stemmed and we sorted through all the whole bunches to ensure that only the top-quality fruit was placed via gravity into our open-top wooden fermenters. The 100% whole bunch, natural fermentation started spontaneously by utilising the wild yeasts present on the fruit. The berries were punched down two to three times per day. Making sure not to break the stems too quickly and to slowly and softly extract the tannins, the wine was left on the skins for a total of 30 days before it was run off via gravity. The skins were then softly pressed, using a basket press and aged in older 600 litre French barrels for 32 months before bottling. The wine received no fining, which allowed the grape to be 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 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.

#### TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA LANGENEGGER

Lovely perfumed nose with hints of white pepper, spice and an earthy aromatics. I enjoy the softness on the palate of this wine with very well balanced tannins that lends it self to great structure and length. I enjoy sipping on this wine while eating a lovely plate of steak tartare.

#### THE NUMBERS

Alc: 13.5%

TA: 5 g/l

pH: 3.7

RS: 1.6 g/l