

EXCELSIOR



Excelsior Merlot 2017

Merlot is one of the more difficult grapes to grow successfully as the variety often displays green flavors and tannins. To minimize this we follow very strict canopy management practices where we sucker (water shoot removal) twice, leaf pluck where necessary, and most importantly bunch thin. This ensures an adequately "open" canopy, so that most berries get sunlight exposure. This brings out the blackcurrant and red fruit characters of Merlot and avoids green tannins.

Grapes are harvested by hand for greater quality control. The wines are immediately destemmed but not crushed. Fermentation took place in stainless steel tanks for a period of 7 days at a temperature of between 28 and 32° Celsius. Aerated racking was done twice daily to ensure a clean ferment and soft tannins. The grapes were gently pressed in a bladder press, after which malo-lactic fermentation was completed in tank.

Aging

45% of the total wine was aged in a mixture of French and American oak for a period of 6 months, whilst the remaining wine was aged in stainless steel tanks.

Vintage Conditions

This is widely regarded as the El Nino year in South Africa. The summer was hotter and riper than normal which required some adaptation in the vineyards to ensure a quality grape harvest. Grapes were harvested earlier than normal to ensure that there was freshness in the wines. The positive aspect of the drought was a very healthy crop with good concentration. The red wines from 2017 are rich and very structured.

Blend

Merlot 100%

Analysis

Alcohol: 14.5%
Acidity: 5.4 g/l
pH: 3.54
Residual Sugar: 2.9 g/l

Winemaker's notes

The nose shows lovely ripe cherry characters, backed up by smoky coffee and spice notes. The palate is soft, yet has a good structure for medium term ageing.

Food pairing by in-house chef

Spring rack of lamb, shank or leg of lamb served pink with fresh herbs or spring vegetables.

