

CIRCUMSTANCE

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2017



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 3 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 (9%), second and third fill (91%) French barrels for 21 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 2016/2017 GROWING SEASON

What looked like an average harvest, due to the winter drought, turned out well, much to our surprise. This also attested yet again that Mother Nature will always keep us on our toes.

The 2016 Cape winter did not see a lot of rainfall – about half the average – and it was also not exceptionally cold. We barely saw any snow on the mountains. Spring started early which resulted in early bud burst and flowering. Thankfully we did not experience strong winds during this period, which helped with an even berry

set. Seeing that we already experienced drought conditions during the berry formation stage, cell formation was also impacted to produce small cells from the start.

In January we received some rain which changed the game and assisted the vines to grow without being too stressed. During the rest of the season we had beautiful cool evenings and mild day temperatures and this ensured a proper, even ripening process.

We started picking at the end of January and were very happy to see little to no rot; small berries with a lot of concentration, and great acids!

TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD

A wine that is distinctly cool climate Cabernet Sauvignon with prominent notes of red berries, balanced by a hint of cumin. The palate shows great focus 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 (barbeque) or slow-cooked lamb shanks.

THE NUMBERS (4 020 bottles produced)

Alc: 14 %
TA: 5.4 g/l
pH: 3.61
RS: 1.7 g/l