

THE CHOCOLATE BLOCK

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FACT SHEET



Alcohol:	14.69%vol
RS:	2.90 g/l
TA:	5.0 g/l
pH:	3.77
Blend:	Syrah 71%; Grenache 11%; Cinsault 9%; Cabernet Sauvignon 8%; Viognier 1%

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Vinification & Winemaker's Comments

Vintage 2019 was preceded by a very dry growing season ensuing in a record-low harvest yield. The crush was down 2% from 2018 tonnages. The optimistic retrospect of these conditions resulted in smaller, more concentrated berries due to their higher pulp-to-juice-ratio. These circumstances, along with green harvesting due to uneven bud-break, were encouraging for the making of wines with great complexity. The Swartland experienced moderate temperatures during December '18 and January '19 with the first heatwaves impacting the appellation during February. The picking window for The Chocolate Block was a mere two-week period. Fortunately, our even greater reliance on our vineyards from Porseleinberg and Goldmine farms made it a manageable fortnight in terms of fruit-picking and refrigerated transport logistics.

By early accounts, 2019 is proving to be another good vintage for Syrah with pronounced black fruit flavours and a classic black olive nuance. The predominant variety (71%) displays a beautiful inkiness in the glass. The Grenache vineyards on Porseleinberg are becoming well-established, and this variety is undoubtedly the bright, perfumed star of the blend revealing an old, *Châteauneuf-du-Pape*-like charm. Old vine Cinsault remains an unheralded gem which effortlessly knits the wine together and establishes a refined elegance. At merely eight percent of this finite variety grown within the appellation, Cabernet Sauvignon is essential in providing structure and grip to the blend.

Syrah and Cinsault were matured in a combination of seasoned 2,500L French oak *foudres* and *barriques*. Grenache was matured in seasoned 600L *demi-muids*. Cabernet Sauvignon was the only component exposed to new French oak *barrique*. The *elevage* ranged between 13 & 16 months, dependant on component and vineyard parcel. 2414 *barriques* were selected for our 2019 vintage.

Tasting Notes

The nose is dark, intense and brooding with aromas of black cherries, cardamom, sweet tobacco, espresso and subtle whiffs of perfume. The dark fruit character of the nose follows through onto an exceptionally complex, juicy palate with gentle nuances of ripe plums, violets, black olives, cloves, and liquorice. The mid-palate is focused, lithe and elegant with very fine, cocoa powdery tannins. The wine is medium bodied, very balanced with an earthy, layered character, covering the entire spectrum of berry fruit - from tart red plums to rich blue and black berries. The finish is svelte, clean and dry, peppery and lingering, with hints of dried cranberry, tar, graphite and smoke.