



MERLOT 2017

VARIETAL(S)	100% Merlot
VINTAGE	Since 1982; current 2017

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is the story behind South Africa's first bottled single varietal Merlot. Upon discovering the Merlot vines he planted in 1973 were infected with leafroll virus, Braam van Velden set out to find healthy virus-free vines. After an extensive search, new Italian clone Merlot vines were obtained and planted in 1979. "Our first vintage from this block was in 1982. The wine was so impressive that we deemed it worthy to be bottled on its own. This also prompted us to extend the wine's time in the small oak barrels to nine months, which was a long time in those days." When the Merlot was bottled in 1983, it was the first single varietal South African Merlot on the market. There were many raised eyebrows: "I remember being asked why we were bottling a blending wine on its own."

VITICULTURE

Vineyard location:	Stellenbosch Kloof, 180m above sea level, south west facing, 15km from False Bay
Moderate Climate:	Winter ave temp - 13°C (min 7°C, max 17°C) Summer ave temp - 21.5°C (min 20.5°C, max 30.5°C)
Soil:	Deep Hutton and Clovelly (decomposed granite)
Age of vines:	36 years
Trellising:	4-wire hedge system with moveable wires
Pruning:	Cordon system with 2 bud spurs
Harvest date:	February 2017
Yield per hectare:	6 tons
Sugar at harvesting:	24.8°B

VINICULTURE

Length of fermentation:	3 days of cold soak, followed by 9-12 days of alcoholic fermentation at 25°C with 3-4 aerated pump-overs per day
Maceration on skins:	10 days
Maturation:	18 months in 30% 2nd, 30% 3rd and 40% neutral (more than 3 fillings in 225L French oak barrels)
Alcohol:	14% vol
Total acid:	5.1 g/l
pH:	3.66
RS:	2.9 g/l

OUR WINEMAKER DAVID VAN VELDEN'S COMMENTS

The Overgaauw Merlot is still made in its original 'Cape Claret' style. David selects certain pockets within the vineyard that shows great fruit concentration and reflects the uniqueness of Overgaauw's Merlot. It is a well-structured, medium-bodied wine with a rich combination of sumptuous black cherry fruit, hints of cocoa powder and elegant spicy oak notes. The fine but firm tannins are complemented by a mouth-filling fruity and lingering complexity. While this Merlot can be enjoyed now, it invites another 7 years in the bottle when it should reveal a pleasant surprise to those with patience. Decant this wine 30 minutes prior for optimum enjoyment.

FOOD SUGGESTIONS

Rare roast beef, grilled leg of lamb with fresh herbs, roasted lamb with creamy blue cheese and nuts, duck and cherry pie, osso bucco and even mild red meat Thai dishes.

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