



2007 Merlot

Technical details:

Varietal:	100% Merlot
Alcohol:	14%
Total acidity:	6.4 g/l
pH:	3.69
Residual sugar:	2.8 g/l

Tasting notes:

The grapes for this wine come from one block on the farm, so in all respect it is a single vineyard wine. Block 16 was planted in 1999 and won the vineyard block competition in 2003 for the best block of vineyards in the Stellenbosch area. Merlot is a very difficult cultivar and we do put a lot of effort into the viticultural side of growing this varietal. We do have very good clay soils for the roots to anchor, but we need a lot of canopy management to get sufficient light to the berries. We also need very strict crop management control and we restrict the vineyard to around 45 hectoliters per hectare. This together with green harvesting gives us a balanced crop with good ripening without having excessive alcohol levels. We always aim to show the classic characteristic for this varietal with good ripe balanced savoury tannins and a good structure. Vegetal and mintiness is an absolute no in this wine. The grapes for this wine are handpicked and sometimes cooled for 24 hours before destemming and crushing. We do have a very strict sorting regime before crushing where we remove all unwanted herbaceous stems etc. It is a very slow process, but we did find that the final results for the sorted grapes is much better than without sorting. It also allows us not to have excessive alcohol levels. Cold maceration is sometimes used, but the berries are mostly inoculated with a selected yeast strain in small open fermentation tanks (4-5 ton stainless). Manual punch down is used to extract color and flavour and we make use of extended maceration in some years. We ferment at higher temperatures, hovering around 29 – 30 degrees Celsius. After pressing, some wine will undergo malolactic fermentation in new French oak Darnajou barrels. We do find these barrels extremely well suited for Merlot, really respecting the fruit and adding elegance and complexity. Deep dark colour. Prominent aromas of chocolate, spice and black berry, well defined. The palette is full bodied with balanced velvety tannins, well supported by French oak. A classic wine, made with passion and a very hands on approach. Drink now or if you are patient you will be rewarded over the next 5-7 years.