

# CIRCUMSTANCE CHARDONNAY 2017



## IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Circumstance Chardonnay is produced from 21 year-old vines on the windswept, low-yielding slopes of the Schapenberg, nestled on the coastal outskirts of Stellenbosch. We abide by organic and biodynamic winemaking methods based on Old World, sustainable practices in our vineyards to ensure that the vines are nourished, healthy and in balance. Our soils are free of chemicals and are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own organic compost.

These traditional methods ensure a balanced vine that produces small yields and intense flavours. The vineyards are about four kilometers from the sea and are planted at a height of 270 to 300 meters above sea level. The soils are of sandstone origin with medium-sized stones helping with drainage and moisture retention. Production was approximately 5 t/ha.

## A GENTLE HAND

Waterkloof's winemaking philosophy is the same for all our premium white wines. We follow a traditional, minimalist approach which means that we interfere as little as possible with the winemaking process. This allows the flavours prevalent in that specific vineyard to be expressed in the bottle. All grapes are picked on taste and whole-bunch pressed in our modern basket press to allow for a gentle extraction of the purest juices. It then settles for 24 hours without the addition of any settling agents, after which we rack the clear juice to our concrete egg fermenter and two new French oak barrels. The final blend was 22% in new fill barrels and the rest in concrete eggs. This wine fermented for about 5 months and was left on the primary lees without the addition of sulphur for a further 4 months. At Waterkloof we also rely on natural, wild yeast fermentation to allow a slow release of aromas and a more structured palate.

## 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 led to an 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, which meant small cells from the start.

In January, we received a little rain which changed the game and assisted the vine 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

Restrained in style, with flinty notes, stone fruits, spice and lime on the nose. The palate shows good oak integration; fresh acidity, and a lingering aftertaste. Numerous dishes will complement this wine but we recommend a prawn risotto as the acid will balance out the richness of the pasta.

#### THE NUMBERS

Alc: 12 %

RS : 2.5

TA : 5.3 g/l

pH: 3.34