

# CIRCUMSTANCE

## SYRAH 2016



### IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Syrah is the red wine varietal that rules the Northern Rhône Valley. There are a number of legends associated with the origins of Syrah, which all add a touch of romance to the grape and today it ranks as the 6th most planted grape variety in the world. It is extremely versatile; adapts well to a wide range of regions, and expresses a true sense of terroir.

The block used for our Circumstance Syrah is planted on the south-facing slopes of the Schapenberg at an altitude of between 240 to 260 metres above sea level and a mere 4kms from the Atlantic Ocean. Strong south-easterly winds help control growth and crop yield. Our Syrah vines flourish in granite soils, just as they do in most of the Northern Rhône appellations. Production was approximately 5 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 apply by using our work-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 and winemaking helps lead to terroir-driven wines that are truly made in the vineyard.

### A GENTLE HAND

We harvest according to taste and find it essential to spend a lot of time in the vineyards to see how the flavours develop. All our grapes are hand-picked, cooled overnight and then processed the following morning. Grapes were not de-stemmed and we sorted through all the whole bunches to ensure that only the top-quality fruit was placed via gravity into our open-top wooden fermenters. The 100% whole bunch, natural fermentation started spontaneously by utilising the wild yeasts present on the fruit. The berries were punched down two to three times per day. Making sure not to break the stems too quickly and to slowly and softly extract the tannins, the wine was left on the skins for a total of 30 days before it was run off via gravity. The skins were then softly pressed, using a basket press and aged in older 600 litre French barrels for 19 months before bottling. The wine received no fining, which allowed the grape to be 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 2015/2016 GROWING SEASON

The Cape did not experience a very cold winter in 2015, with near perfect days lingering at 20°C. The evenings were cold but not excessively so. We also experienced the driest winter to date with half the normal rainfall.

Budburst took place at the beginning of September, which was definitely earlier than usual. It was a proper spring with lots of sun and warm temperatures.

We started picking a week earlier than last year (which was already early). A lot of the producers were significantly down on crop yield (some even up to 50%). Fortunately, our biodynamic vines have a deep root system (approximately six metres deep), compared to conventional vineyards (digging only one meter deep) and we were not down on yield by too much.

With the berries being very small this year the flavours were fantastic. Some raisins still developed on the later varieties, which we got rid of in the cellar. The skins on the reds were thicker than normal but brimming with concentration.

#### TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD

This wine shows a great expression of dark berries and earthy tones infused with a fresh perfume scent. The fruit is carried by a fresh acidity and soft and well-balanced tannins. Elegant with great length. Syrah is one of the most versatile wines to pair with food. This specific vintage might be very interesting with a rabbit dish or even duck.

#### THE NUMBERS (14 300 bottles produced)

Alc: 12.5 %

RS: 1.9

TA: 5.3

pH: 3.6

VA: 0.66