

# CIRCUMSTANCE

## SYRAH 2017



### 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 5 kms 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 21 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 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 to produce small cells from the start.

In January we received some 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**

This wine shows a great expression of floral, spice, savoury notes and earthy tones infused with a fresh perfume scent. The fruit is carried by a fresh acidity and soft, 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 (7,716)**

Alc: 14 %

RS: 1.5

TA: 5.2

pH: 3.7

VA: 0.7