

CIRCUMSTANCE

CABERNET FRANC 2021



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Cabernet Franc is the original "Cabernet" grape, being one of the parents of Cabernet Sauvignon (a cross between Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc).

This variety ripens earlier than Cabernet Sauvignon, which makes it ideal for the cool slopes of the Schapenberg.

The vines are grown on south-west facing slopes of the Schapenberg, Somerset West. The farm is a mere 5km from the Atlantic Ocean, with vines planted at a height of between 240 and 260 meters above sea level. The soils are of decomposed granite origin with medium sized stones, helping with both drainage and moisture retention. Strong south-easterly winds occur during the growing season, which helps to control growth and crop size. Production was approximately 4 tons/ha. In other words, packed full of flavour!

At Waterkloof, we do not spray herbicides, fungicides or pesticides in our vineyards. We produce our own compost and natural preparations, which we then disperse into the soil by utilizing our horses as opposed to heavy tractors. This ensures soil with more life, where the vine can spread its roots as it pleases, taking up everything it needs from this complex soil. The result is honest, terroir-driven wines – a true reflection of our unique vineyard site.

A GENTLE HAND

We harvest according to taste and 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. We are always trying 'new' or shall we say... *old*, traditional approaches, that is why, after beginning to work with whole-bunches for our Rhone varieties in 2009, we now do the same with Cabernet Franc.

Bunches are hand-sorted so that only the best grapes are then placed into wooden fermenters via our winery's gravity-flow system. The alcoholic fermentation started spontaneously with the natural yeasts found in our chemical-free vineyards. A combination of soft punch downs and delestage we used during the fermentation process. First by feet and then at the end of fermentation, with a soft punch-down machine to ensure a moderate extraction of colour and tannin. The wine spent a total of around 30 days on the skins to help integrate the tannins. The skins were separated from the juice via gravity-flow and then gently pressed in a basket press. All the wine went through malolactic fermentation in mainly 2nd and 3rd fill French barrels and was then aged for 24 months. We make the wine as naturally and untamed as possible, with no additions of acids or enzymes.

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE – 2020/2021 GROWING SEASON

South Africa's Western Cape is privileged to have a vast array of soils and climates, all within a relatively small area. Here at Waterkloof it is no different in our amphitheater of vineyards.

This vintage dates back to the old normal, which is great. A cold, wet winter. Warm spring and summer, without excessively high temperatures. The famously ferocious winds of Waterkloof have played their usual hand, naturally controlling yield and fungal disease such as mildew. Perfect. In 2021, we were picking everything at well over a hundred days from flowering. We saw very high acid levels during this vintage because of these cooler growing conditions. As with all years we had to spend a lot of time in the vineyards tasting to determine optimal ripeness and find a good balance.

We were happy to see slow ripening in the vineyards which always goes hand in hand with good quality.

The last vintage similar was the great 1997

NADIA LANGENEGGER'S TASTING NOTE

A Cabernet Franc true to the variety's characteristics showing a slight note of Cape fynbos, complimented by flavors of bright red fruit and hints of plums. It has great structure with a fresh acidity. It pairs well with a lamb curry. I recommend decanting our Cabernet Franc wine an hour or so before enjoying it.

THE NUMBERS (4 800 BOTTLES PRODUCED)

Alc: 13.5 %
TA: 5.2
pH: 3.73
RS: 1.6