



### **IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS**

Circle of Life celebrates farming in harmony with nature, telling a story of preserving and regenerating biodiversity, which we feel helps grow healthier and more characterful grapes.

In 2008 Waterkloof became one of The Western Cape Wineland's first WWF (World Wildlife Fund) Conservation Champions. Half of the property is now dedicated to preserving the diverse, indigenous but threatened plant-life that make up one of Earth's five major Floristic Regions. Of course, it is not only the flora that we help preserve and regenerate on Waterkloof, but also the inextricably connected fauna that play their part in any thriving eco-system, alongside our vines, the soil in which they stand and let's not forget ourselves, the custodians who farm this land.

Since receiving WWF Conservation Champion status, five of our neighbours have followed suit, benefitting this winegrowing hillside still further. The Schapenberg is now the ideal canvas of vineyards upon which to craft this intricately woven tapestry of a blend we call Circle of Life.

**A film to find out more about Biodiversity on Waterkloof –**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJKGHOa15Yk>

### **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 grapes were hand-picked into small picking crates, sorted in the vineyards and brought to the cellar by our horses. To ensure that only the best berries are used, we sorted all grapes by hand in the winery as well. These were then placed into our wooden fermenters via our gravity system. The Rhône varietals were whole-bunch fermented and the Bordeaux varietals were de-stemmed. The fermentation started naturally with yeast present on the grapes to enhance the flavours prevailing in the vineyards. We also don't add any sulphur at this point. Just pure grapes in our wooden fermenters.

Throughout the fermentation process, we did soft punch downs twice a day to gently and slowly extract the tannins. The wines spent around 30 days on the skins, during which time the tannins were able to soften. This duration is dependent on taste.

After the maceration time on the skins, we ran the wine down via gravity – still no pumping. The grape skins also fell through into the basket press and were softly pressed to gently extract the last bit of wine, aroma and colour from the skins.

The varietals were aged separately in French oak. 600L Barrels for the Rhône varietal and 225L barrels for the Bordeaux varietals. Only 10 % were new barrels, to avoid dominance of wood aromatics in our wines.

After 12 months in barrel, we blended the Cabernet Franc (49%), Petit Verdot (35%), and Syrah (16%) together and kept it for another 18 months in our wooden fermenters. This wine is unfinned and gently filtered.

### **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**

I enjoy the different layers of this wine and how it continues to evolve in your glass as it opens up. On the nose I pick up a variety of different aromas ranging from red plums, to leafy herbs, black pepper as well as black cherries. On the palate the wine is very expressive and has silky tannins. This wine is great with food, it would work well with veal. It can be enjoyed now, but can age easily for ten years.

**THE NUMBERS (14 500 BOTTLES PRODUCED)**

Alc: 13.5 %

RS: 2

TA: 5.2 g/l

pH: 3.77

VA: 0.75