



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=wJGHOa15Yk>

A GENTLE HAND

We mainly rely on tasting to determine the optimum flavour development of the grapes. Bunches are hand-picked, into small picking crates, early in the mornings, when they are still cool, which helps to preserve the flavours. Extracting juice from the grapes is achieved through whole-bunch pressing in our modern basket press. This is the most delicate way to extract the juice. No additions of enzymes or settling agents were made to the juice.

After a settling period of 24 hours, a large proportion of the juice was destined for co-fermentation. We determined two blends prior to fermentation one of Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc as well as a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon which all went into old 600-liter barrels- from where it fermented for six months. After the fermentation was completed, the blend was racked to a stainless-steel tank to which we added the rest of the Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Semillon. To have the varietals integrate we decided to leave the blend in barrel on the fine lees until its bottling date six months later. This helped to add more complexity and weight to the palate. We produce the wine as naturally as possible, with no additions of acids or enzymes. The final blend is 69% Sauvignon Blanc, 26% Chenin Blanc and 5% Semillon

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE – 2022/2023 GROWING SEASON

The 2022 Winter was slightly warmer than the previous years and we also saw less rainfall. Keeping all of this in mind our farm manager (Christiaan Loots) started to implement minimum tilling in the vineyard, packing more mulch in between the vines, adding biochar and experimenting with interesting cover crops. All with the aim of improving the soil health by promoting more beneficial microbial growing conditions, retaining moisture, keeping the soil cooler and adding natural forms of nitrogen. In the last 3 years he has taken the percentage of carbon matter from 1% in some block to 4%.

With the slightly warmer Winter conditions we were surprised by an earlier budburst as well as flowering. We were lucky to not experience strong winds during the growing period which helped to have an even fruit set.

The growing season took an interesting turn during the second week of December with heavy rainfall. The team had to be on a close watch of the vineyard to make sure that we avoid any mildew.

Verasion was a week or so earlier and even due to the additional rainfall. We assumed that the harvest would then also start earlier but with the rest of the growing season being moderate to cool we only really got into the full swing of harvest from the second week of February.

The harvest was complicated a bit more with heavy rain falling toward the end of February. Luckily by this time we had already harvested all our white varietals and only had a few blocks of red left. We waited a week for the vineyard to utilize the excess water but it did help us to achieve good phenolic ripeness on the later red varietals. In the end a blessing from Mother nature!

Interesting enough we saw more bunches this year but smaller berries. The whites were up a little bit in yield and the reds were similar to 2022. The quality looks great with a lot of concentration and optimal acid levels.

NADIA LANGENEGGER'S TASTING NOTE

A very well-balanced and rounded wine. The nose shows notes of ripe quince, green apple, pear and lovely minerality. The palate is structured and rounded with a beautiful acidity as well as length. Definitely a wine that will match numerous dishes but I can see myself enjoying this alongside a simple scallop dish- with a touch or more of butter.

THE NUMBERS (18 000 BOTTLES PRODUCED)

Alc: 14 %

TA: 5.1

pH: 3.45

RS: 3.9