



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

Circle of Life tells the story of Waterkloof: A once conventionally farmed vineyard with great potential, that - since Paul Boutinot took over the property - has been transformed into a living, breathing regenerative vineyard by Farm Manager Christiaan Loots and his team.

At Waterkloof we strive to produce balanced, characterful wines by adhering to traditional regenerative methods. Our soils are free of chemicals and are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own organic compost. We do not fight nature, we harness it.

Our focus has always been to get a better understanding of Waterkloof and the individual characters of its vineyard blocks. The Circumstance range allows these individual blocks and varieties to be expressed. Conversely, our objective with Circle of Life has been to produce two blends that encapsulate all the varying terroir characteristics and grape varieties found on Waterkloof-they are a true reflection of the totality, philosophy and specificity of Waterkloof.

### **A GENTLE HAND**

We harvest according to taste and find it essential to spend most of our 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. The whole bunches were placed into our wooden fermenters via our gravitational system. 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 varieties were aged separately in 600L French oak barrels. Only 10 % were new barrels, to avoid dominance of wood aromatics in our wines.

After 12 months in barrel, we blended the Mourvèdre (64%), and Syrah (36%) together and kept it for another 12 months in our wooden fermenters. This wine is unfiltered and gently filtered.

### **AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE – 2021/2022 GROWING SEASON**

A cool season with moderate weather conditions during the 2022 harvest. This gave the vine the opportunity to reach full phenolic ripeness and develop complex flavours.

The current harvest quality is dependent on the previous Winter conditions. The 2021 Winter started early and saw proper leaf fall during the month of May. The rest of the Winter was ideal and cold but we still did not have enough rain on the farm.

On the Waterkloof farm we decide to focus on a minimum tilling approach to try and build up the natural carbon percentage in the soil. Christiaan, our farm manager, started putting chipped plant cuttings down in between the vines going 30 to 40 cm high. Over this he would spray earth worm teas which will break the plant material down into a carbon source.

The legume and wild oats cover crop will only be rolled flat- only cleaning in between the vines with the aim of preserving the carbon in the soil and increasing the water holding capacity.

Due to a cold Spring budding was delayed by 2 weeks on average. Once flowering started the vine caught up and was only about 5 days later than the average year.

Luckily during flowering, we did not see strong winds and had an even berry set in the area. From December on the vine's growth was accelerated by the warmer growing conditions. We had a few heat peaks in December and in January.

**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 florals, red plums, to leafy herbs, black pepper as well as earthy notes.

On the palate the wine is very expressive and has silky tannins.

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

Alc: 13 %

RS: 1.9

TA: 5.1 g/l

pH: 3.77

VA: 0.7