

## Middelvlei Pinotage/Merlot 2003

Middelvlei was the first South African producer to release a Pinotage Merlot blend in 1995. This oak-matured blend enters with delightful fruitiness derived from the Merlot. It celebrates the perfect marriage of the two cultivars on the middle palate and is beautifully supported by the firm tannins of the Pinotage.

**variety :** Pinotage | Pinotage, Merlot

**winery :** Middelvlei Wines

**winemaker :** Tinnie Momberg

**wine of origin :** Devon Valley

**analysis :** alc : 13.5 % vol rs : 1.8 g/l pH : 3.71 ta : 5.8 g/l

**type :** Red **style :** Dry **body :** Medium **taste :** Fruity **wooded**

**pack :** Bottle **closure :** Cork



**in the vineyard :** The Pinotage grape is unique to South Africa and is derived from the noble Pinot Noir and Cinsault (formerly called Hermitage) varieties. The Mombergs are amongst the foremost producers of Pinotage wines. At Middelvlei, 24.24 ha are devoted to Pinotage, planted at 3 704 per ha. The vines, grafted onto Richter 99 rootstock, were planted in 1962, 1975 and 1996. The vineyards face west and are situated at an altitude of 160 m above sea-level. The vines, grown as bush vines, are severely pruned to inhibit their prolific growth.

The Merlot vines on Middelvlei were planted in 1986 and 1988 and cover 9,88 ha. They were grafted on rootstock Richter 99 and are situated at an altitude of 160 m above sea-level, facing southwest. The rainfall during the winter before the vintage, as well as the growing season (September - December), was average. The annual rainfall was 727mm for the 2002/2003 season compared to the long-term annual rainfall of 700mm.

**about the harvest:** The Pinotage grapes used in this superior blend were harvested between 3 February and 19 February 2003, with the grapes at an average sugar level of 25° Balling. They were picked by hand between 06:00 and 18:00 and placed in small baskets to prevent bruising. The Merlot grapes were harvested between 19 February and 25 February 2003.

**in the cellar :** In the cellar, the juice of both varieties was fermented on the skins for 4 days in open cement tanks at 26° C (both varieties). The yeast type used for inoculation was WE 372. The wines also underwent secondary malolactic fermentation. After wood maturation the wine was blended in a ratio of 55% Pinotage to 45% Merlot. The wine was matured in second fill oak barrels for 16 months – 85% in French oak and 5% in American oak.