

## Asara Merlot 2000

This well matured Merlot displays the distinctive characters that are found in the Merlot vineyards of Asara. Ripe blackberry and cassis flavours from mature grapes were carefully nurtured in French oak for 18 months. On the palate there is structure, elegance and mouthfilling fruit with hints of white chocolate.

**variety :** Merlot | 100% Merlot  
**winery :** Asara Wine Estate and Hotel  
**winemaker :** Jan van Rooyen  
**wine of origin :** Stellenbosch  
**analysis :** alc : 13.5 % vol    rs : 2.2 g/l    pH : 3.35    ta : 5.6 g/l  
**type :** Red    **style :** Dry    **wooded**  
**pack :** Bottle

SAA inflight 2006 - Economy Class  
Silver - International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) 2005  
Grand Gold Medal - Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2005  
Bronze - Veritas Awards 2005

**ageing :** A wine that is ready to be enjoyed now but will last for at least 8 more years.

**in the vineyard :** Age: 8 y/o.  
Clone: MD12  
Rootstock: Richter 99  
Soil type: Tukul Yellow Brown Gravel  
Trellising: 5 wire removable Perold  
Plant spacing: 1.2m by 2.7m

The area between Stellenboschkloof and Devon Valley, where Asara Wine Estate is located, is well known for fine red wines. We have taken the tradition of great red wine growing a step further by carefully selecting the planting sites for our Merlot, and in doing this we have added more value to the wine. This approach has proved to be successful since the Merlot from Asara was awarded a Gold medal in 2004 (for the 1999 vintage) and a Grand Gold medal in 2005 (for this 2000 vintage) at the prestigious Concours Mondial de Bruxelles.

**about the harvest:** The time of harvest was determined by analysis as well as tasting of the grape skins and seeds for optimal maturity. Analysis at crush showed a pH of 3.35, total acidity of 6.8 g/l and a sugar level of 24.8° Balling.

**in the cellar :** A cold maceration of 48 hours prior to alcoholic fermentation with selected yeast strains is the key to producing great Merlot from this Estate. The fermentation lasted for two weeks at a temperature of between 25 and 29°C. Pumpovers by means of rack-and-return occurred regularly during the first week to ensure full extraction of flavour and ripe tannins. The secondary malolactic fermentation took place in stainless steel tanks. This was followed up by another very important step in the production of great red wines, namely traditional maturation in French oak casks for 18 months. The maturation takes place at a constant humidity and a temperature of 15 to 16°C, to ensure a slow and natural evolution of flavours that is necessary to create a perfect marriage between oak and fruit. We determined the end of this maturation period by tasting each barrel for flavour and structure. The process of blending the barrels together to produce the final wine was the next step. Five blends were put forward to the panel of judges to select the best Merlot which was then stabilised and lightly filtered before bottling.

