

## Asara Merlot 2003

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 cedar wood and mint.

**variety :** Merlot | 100% Merlot

**winery :** Asara Wine Estate and Hotel

**winemaker :** Jan van Rooyen

**wine of origin :** Stellenbosch

**analysis :** alc : 14.0 % vol rs : 2.3 g/l pH : 3.45 ta : 6.4 g/l

**type :** Red **style :** Dry **wooded**

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

John Platter Wine Guide - 4 Stars

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

**in the vineyard :** Age: 9 years old

Soil type: Tukululu Yellow Brown Gravel

Clone: MD12

Trellising: 5 wire movable Perold

Rootstock: Richter 99

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 has been well awarded over the years.

**about the harvest:** The time of harvest was determined by analysis as well as tasting of the grape skins and seeds for optimal maturity.

**in the cellar :** A cold maceration of 48 hours prior to alcoholic fermentation with selected="true" yeast strains is the key to producing great Merlot from this Estate. The fermentation lasted for two weeks at a temperature of between 25Å° and 29 Å°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 15Å° to 16 Å°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.

On 2 December 2005 the wine was bottled in the following sizes: 9 800 x 750 ml and 1 300 x 375 ml.

