

## Circumstance Merlot 2005

A smooth, textured wine with fine tannins, but with enough backbone to last at least a decade or more. Layered complexity that exhibits lush fruitiness, spice and exuberance with a long finish. Deep, layered ripe black berry fruit, also featuring a hint of sweet liquorice.

**variety :** Merlot | 100% Merlot

**winery :** Waterkloof

**winemaker :** Werner Engelbrecht

**wine of origin :** Western Cape

**analysis :** alc : 14.5 % vol   rs : 2.2 g/l   pH : 3.6   ta : 5.4 g/l

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

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

**in the vineyard :** The south-west facing vineyards producing the Circumstance Merlot are cultivated on the farm Waterkloof. It is situated on Schapenberg Hill in Somerset West, part of the Stellenbosch appellation. The farm is about four kilometres from the sea, and the Merlot vineyards are planted at a height of between 240 and 260 metres above sea level. The soils are of sandstone origin with medium-sized stones, helping with drainage, but also a very good ability to retain moisture. The 2005 vintage was cultivated under dry land conditions and the vineyards are trellised to handle the canopy effectively. Strong south-easterly winds occurred during the growing season, which helped to control growth and crop. The vineyards are of an average age of between 9 and 11 years. Production was approximately 7 tons/ha.

### 2005 GROWING SEASON

The 2005 vintage was characterised by rains during the early parts of the growing season from September to November. Vineyards were more vigorous than normal and extra work had to be done to keep the canopies in balance. Strong winds during the growing season assisted in keeping the berries relatively small and concentrated. The ripening period was warm and little rain fell in the period. Rains just before harvest, at the end of January, provided much needed moisture to the Merlot vineyards. Very little water stress occurred and this helped the grapes to reach phenological ripeness.

**about the harvest:** The grapes were harvested by hand in small picking crates towards the end of February.

**in the cellar :** The grapes were de-stemmed and fermented with naturally occurring yeasts in open-top stainless steel tanks. Manual punch-downs (twice a day) were used during fermentation to maximise colour and tannin extraction. The wines spend an additional 20 days on the skins after fermentation to help integrate the tannins and stabilise the colour. The skins were separated from the juice by a gentle pressing. All the wine went through malolactic fermentation in barrel. Wine was aged in new (60%) and second-fill (40%) French barrels for 18 months.

