

Radford Dale Gravity 2009

In an era where over-blown, in-your-face wines too often take precedence over individually crafted and complex wines, our standard bearer strives to be singular. We aim for equilibrium, between natural sweetness of fruit and integration of structure. Each varietal contributes its unique facets; the Shiraz its persevering spiciness and its gutsy, supple body, the Cabernet its blueberry backbone and dense, ripe tannins, the Merlot its deep red-berry fruit and suave mouth-feel. All knitted together by patient hands-off maturation. This wine bears the hallmark of the region it was reared in and the mineral soils in which it has its roots. Entirely selfishly, it is made with our own palates in mind.

variety : Shiraz | 28% Shiraz, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, 39% Merlot

winery : The Winery of Good Hope

winemaker : Team Effort

wine of origin : Stellenbosch

analysis : alc : 14.0 % vol rs : 2.2 g/l pH : 3.7 ta : 5.4 g/l

type : Red **style :** Dry

pack : Bottle **closure :** Screwcap

in the vineyard : Like in so many parts of the world 2009 was a really wonderful all-round vintage. In the Cape, conditions were fantastic throughout, for red & white, from beginning to end. An excellent flowering, cooler than usual summer evenings and the resultant extended ripening season. There was plenty of rainfall during the season too, which allowed the grapes to grow and ripen in almost ideal conditions. We are in any case never short of sun, but when we have cool evenings and retain acidity in the grapes better balance is ensured than in the very hot vintages. Bunch and grape sizes were relatively small and free of rot and the grapes tasted wonderfully.

Each parcel of these vines is situated on ocean-facing, mountainous slopes of the premium Stellenbosch Appellation, predominantly on the Helderberg. These less hot maritime areas of Stellenbosch benefit thus from the cooling influence of the ocean, sanitizing breezes and the relative altitude. Yields were kept low, at around 28 -35 Hl / Ha. We pre-select the fruit in the vineyard by dropping just ahead of picking any fruit which is not 100%. All grapes are hand-picked and pass over a sorting table, as a precaution. No grapes find their way into this wine unintentionally.

in the cellar : Following the triage process, by hand, each batch of grapes is entirely de-stemmed then pre-fermentation cold-soaked for +/-5 days, all individually. Pump-overs were done once a day, as for cap-punching. The emphasis is specifically not on over-extraction, but rather on finesse and depth. Left on skins for +/-10 days after fermentation before racking off. One component sees the free-run juice going directly to barrel (small barrels, using only artisanal French coopers we import directly), entirely by gravity. The pomace and skins are left over-night to drip-drain – this time into “Demi-Muids” (600L French Oak barrels. We have been importing these into South Africa for over a decade, having seen how beautifully they work in some of the great Syrahs of the Northern Rhone). These are not mechanical pressings but natural, gravitational pressings, which give rise to far more integrated and supple tannins in the final wine (and to the name of this wine). Whatmore, this juice is denser and richer than free-run, without the astringency of mechanical pressings. A Twilight zone, in miniscule proportions. A natural asset, coaxed out of obscurity. Micro-oxygenation is carried-out in barrel and Demi-Muids to further develop polished tannins, deeper colour and greater fruit intensity. Malolactic fermentation occurs in barrel and Demi-Muids for optimum integration. Generally speaking, we keep the usage of new oak to about 1/3 only, the rest being 2nd, 3rd & 4th fill. The individual components are separately matured, on their primary lees for about 9 months. The barrel wines are then racked-out, assembled for the first time in tank, then returned to barrel, harmonised, to complete maturation over a further 5 or 6-month period.



The Demi-Muids gravitational portion remains unracked and completely untouched until it is drawn from the Demi-Muids after 15 months, assembled with the barrel portion, settled for a month then bottled, without fining or filtration. This to our knowledge is a unique method in South Africa, it has produced a wine of depth, complexity and intensity, yet with finesse and class. By definition, production will always be highly limited (we don't bottle Gravity every vintage) and can only come from our finest Stellenbosch grapes.