

## Ernie Els Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

The 2010 is the epitome of New World Cabernet Sauvignon. Notes of cassis exude a rich and powerful nose complemented by hints of local *fynbos* and tobacco smoke. The palate is massively rich, stately and suave, coated by luxurious tannins that melt into its brooding frame. A long mineral tail wags with notes of liquorice and cedar, rounded off by a velvety and seductive grip. Whilst emphatic and approachable now, this classic Cabernet Sauvignon yearns for further aging.

**variety :** Cabernet Sauvignon | 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

**winery :** Ernie Els Wines

**winemaker :** Louis Strydom

**wine of origin :** Stellenbosch

**analysis :** alc : 14,5 % vol rs : 1,9 g/l pH : 3,69 ta : 6,4 g/l

**type :** Red **style :** Dry **body :** Full **taste :** Mineral **wooded**

**pack :** Bottle **size :** 0 **closure :** Cork

Veritas Wine Awards 2012 - Gold Medal

International Wine Challenge 2012 - Silver Medal

Decanter World Wine Awards 2012 - Bronze Medal

### **in the vineyard :** The 2010 Vintage

After a late start winter 2009 was like the Cape winters of old; plentiful rain and cold. Early spring rains with unusually cold weather delayed budding and growth thus suggesting the harvest would be at least two weeks late; some noticeably cooler than average weather also continued throughout January 2009. After good, even budding the cold weather affected flowering and berry set, this in-turn slowed down ripening resulting in great flavour accumulation. Berry size tended to be smaller than average hence giving an excellent fruit-to-skin ratio; the makings for outstanding colour intensity. The hot weather arrived later than usual - well into February. All fruit began ripening simultaneously, putting immense pressure on space in the cellar. Also during February we had to contend with bushfires in the Stellenbosch and Helderberg mountains which burned for about 5 weeks. The crop yield was slightly down; quality was excellent nonetheless.

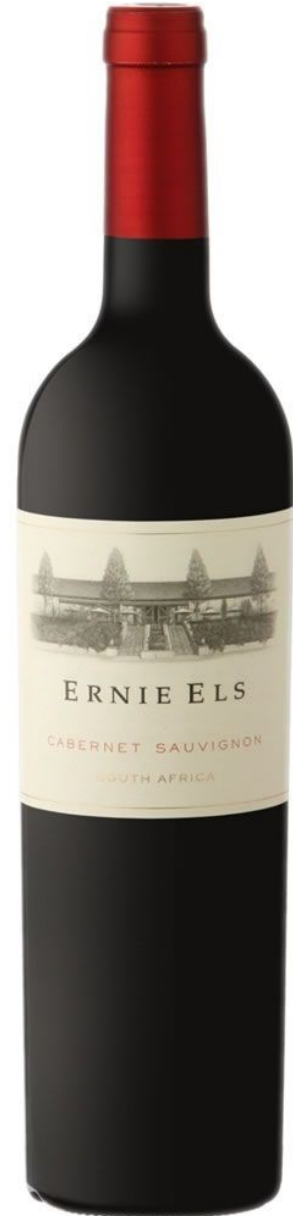
### **About the Vineyard**

What an intense year! It was extremely difficult to make predictions due to the constant fluctuations in weather conditions, with unrelenting winds prevailing almost throughout. Initially matters were quite advanced, with early bud burst, then cold weather in October and November delayed everything, and subsequently favourable conditions and the small size of the crop tended to move harvest dates forward. Production cost was high from the start and expenses per ton skyrocketed because of the decline in yield.

### **2009 Growing Season**

Cool, overcast and rainy weather conditions during the induction period in October/November 2008 had an adverse effect on bunch initiation for the 2010 harvest and impacted on this year's crop. Although sufficient winter cold prevailed, the cool, wet spring caused uneven budding on Ernie Els. The season was characterised by unrelenting strong winds during October and November. The summer months were exceptionally dry and windy. Sunburn, wind and heat damage combined with downy mildew resulted in crop losses of up to 40% on certain blocks.

The overall cool climate during the first part of ripening was beneficial for flavour retention. February and March experienced the usual sporadic heat waves. The heat wave at the beginning of March 2010 which lasted longer than a week will certainly go down in the annals. Due to the smaller crop most blocks could be picked at optimal ripeness. The decrease in volumes also meant that cellar space was often not a problem, and we could allow prolonged skin contact.



**about the harvest:** The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning.

**The wines**

We at Ernie Els are more than satisfied with the quality of the grapes that were harvested. Grapes were healthy with good flavours and analyses. Bunches were generally looser than normal and berries smaller, with an excellent fruit to skin ratio resulting in intense colour in the red wines.

**in the cellar :** Grape bunches were gently destalked with a Bucher de-stalker and lightly crushed. On the sorting table, all excess stalks and rotten berries were removed carefully by hand. Fermentation took place in 7-ton, open top, stainless steel tanks with yeast WE 372 being added to the juice. The wines were pumped-over and punched-down manually 5 times per day ensuring maximum colour extraction from the skins. After primary fermentation the maceration period was 14 days before pressing.