

Middelvlei Pinotage/Merlot 1998

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Appearance: Bright garnet red with shades of crimson.

Nose: Rich aromatic flavours of plums and blackcurrant backed by mild wooded spices.

Palate: Medium-bodied wine with concentrated berry flavours. Well structured tannins and a delightful lingering aftertaste.

variety : Pinotage | 60% Pinotage 40% Merlot

winery : Middelvlei Wines

winemaker : Tinnie Momberg

wine of origin : Devon Valley

analysis : alc : 13.5 % vol pH : 3.5 ta : 5.95 g/l

type : Red **style :** Dry **body :** Medium **taste :** Fruity **wooded**

pack : Bottle **closure :** Cork



in the vineyard : Pinotage Merlot 1999

The Pinotage grape is unique to South Africa and is derived from the noble Pinot Noir and Cinsault (formerly called Hermitage) varieties. The Mombergs are amongst the foremost producers of Pinotage wines.

At Middelvlei, 17 ha are devoted to Pinotage, planted at 3 704 per ha. The vines, grafted onto Richter 99 rootstock, were on average 30 years old in the vintage year. The vineyards face west and are situated at an altitude of 160 m above sea-level. The vines, grown as bush vines, are severely pruned to inhibit their prolific growth.

The Merlot vines on Middelvlei are planted in a 19,1 ha block, at 3 704 vines per hectare. Planted in 1987, these trellised vines were 11 years old in the vintage year. They were grafted on rootstock Richter 99 and are situated at an altitude of 160 m above sea-level, facing southwest.

The winter before the vintage was dry and very cold and due to a late spring the growing season (September to December) was much cooler than usual. The annual rainfall was 609mm for the 1997/1998 season.

about the harvest: The Pinotage grapes used in this superior blend were harvested on 18 February 1998, with the grapes at an average sugar level of 24° Balling. They were picked by hand between 06:00 and 18:00 and placed in small baskets to prevent bruising.

in the cellar : In the cellar, the juice of both varieties was fermented on the skins for 4 days in open cement tanks at 26° C. The yeast type used for inoculation was WE 372. The wines also underwent secondary malolactic fermentation. After wood maturation the wine was blended in a ratio of 50% Pinotage to 50% Merlot. The wine was in French oak for 12 months. Forty percent of the wine was in new oak and the remaining 60% in second fill barrels.

Date Bottled: October 1999.