

Circumstance Merlot 2008

Lots of red fruit, spice and tobacco flavours on the nose. The ripe fruit is balanced by the natural acidity, firm tannins and great length.

variety : Merlot | 100% Merlot

winery : Waterkloof

winemaker : Werner Engelbrecht

wine of origin : Western Cape

analysis : alc : 13.5 % vol rs : 1.6 g/l pH : 3.42 ta : 5.70 g/l

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

pack : Bottle **closure :** Cork

in the vineyard : The Vineyards

The Southwest facing vineyards producing the Circumstance Merlot are cultivated on the farm Waterkloof. Waterkloof is on Schaapenberg Hill in Somerset West, part of the Stellenbosch appellation. The farm is about 5 kilometers from the sea, and the Merlot vineyards are planted at a height of between 240 and 260 meters above sea level. The soils are of sandstone origin with medium size stones, helping with both drainage and good moisture retention. The 2008 vintage was cultivated under dry land conditions and the vineyards are trellised to effectively handle the canopy. Strong South Easterly winds occurred during the growing season, which helped to control growth and crop. The vineyards are 11 years old. Production was approximately 8 tons/ha.

The 007/08 Growing Season

A winter which provided much needed rain and cold weather was followed by a cool, wet spring. The regular rains during spring and the early parts of the summer led to higher than normal disease pressure. We had to increase our spraying intervals in order to insure that our vineyards stay free from disease. Cloudy periods during flowering resulted in irregular set. Bunches were loose and the berries small, which allowed for an even veraison. The cool weather during spring followed through into the early parts of summer. It allowed us to pick the whites during cool conditions.

about the harvest: The Merlot vineyards were harvested towards the end of February.

in the cellar : The grapes were destemmed and fermented with naturally occurring yeasts in open top wooden tanks. Manual punch downs (twice a day) were used during fermentation to maximize colour and tannin extraction. The wines spent a total of 30 days on the skins to help integrate the tannins and stabilize the colour. The skins were separated from the juice through a gentle pressing. All the wine went through malolactic fermentation in barrel. The wine was aged in new (30%) and 2nd fill (70%) French barrels for 22 months. We make the wine as natural as possible, with no additions of acids, or enzymes allowed.

