

Newton Johnson Grenache Blend 2010 (yet to be named)

variety : Grenache | 68% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, 12% Syrah

winery :

winemaker : _

wine of origin : Walker Bay

analysis : alc : 14.1 % vol rs : 2.1 g/l pH : 3.45 ta : 5.45 g/l

type : Red **style :** Dry

pack : Bottle **closure :** Cork

in the vineyard : Background

Grenache is very much a new arrival in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. With so much scope yet to fulfill here, it displays a freshness, succulence, and verve that not only echoes the style of the area, but is also at home on granite soils. This wine is an exploration in to the boundaries that lie outside Burgundy grape varieties in our area and in to the lower, stony reaches of the valley. Grenache ripens well in well-drained soils with the help of latent heat stored in the stony soils in late summer. The best parcels of Mourvèdre on similar soils were retained for the blend, as was the Syrah from the Echelas (staked) vines.

Location and Climate

The **Hemel-en-Aarde Valley** ranges in its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean from 2 to 5 km. Its climate is more 'temperate' in style, where parallel mountain ranges channel the southerly maritime winds through the appellation during the summer. These winds in turn bring regular sea mists and overcast conditions to the valley and with it more even temperatures. The average mean temperature is 19.8°C and rainfall per year is approximately 750mm.

The **Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley** ranges in its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean from 5 to 11 km, and has an elevation of 250 - 350m. The soils are a mix of various concentrations of granitic sandstone and clay, quite different from the lower part of the valley.

Appellation

63% Hemel-en-Aarde Valley

37% Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley

Soil Type

Hemel-en-Aarde Valley - Bokkeveld shale

Upper Hemel-en-Aarde - Tukulu (Decomposed granite on clay, kaolinitic)

Aspect

Hemel-en-Aarde Valley - North-West

Upper Hemel-en-Aarde - West

Trellising System

5-wire Vertical Shoot Positioning (VSP) with movable wires, Goblet (Bush vine), and Echelas (one stake per vine) training.

Pruning

Cordon, Echelas, Goblet

Age of Vines

4 - 12 years

Vines per hectare

3300 - 5100

Average Yield

5 - 7 tons/ha (30-42 hl/ha)

Growing Season & Harvesting

Some late winter spells of warm weather induced earlier budding with some of the early varieties. Although abundant water and disease-free conditions were conducive to good growth during the Spring, the vineyards were plagued with intense South East winds that halted growth in the canopy and caused much damage. December saw much of the canopy restored and much work was needed on it in order to balance the ripening. The summer saw some dry, hot spells. All in all, the flavours from this vintage are aromatic, bright, and ripe that should drink well at an early stage.

about the harvest: All the fruit is harvested by hand and picked in to large-surface area 13kg crates.

in the cellar : The harvest is cooled down overnight to 8°C in the winery's grape refrigeration room. The bunches are sorted on a conveyor, destemmed, berry sorted by hand again, and crushed (some parcels vary, with up to 100% not crushed). All transfers of grape must are attained with the use of gravity, pumps are totally avoided until blending before bottling as we believe the mechanical action may damage the structure and adversely affect the flavours of the wine. Cold maceration ensues for 3 to 6 days at below 10°C. Slower fermentations are preferred and are all 100% natural. Only pigeage (punching down) is applied for extraction. The fermentation temperatures peak between 24 and 30°C, depending on the flavour extraction required of each vineyard parcel site. On rare occasions certain wines will spend a days of post-maceration time on the skins. After pressing the wine is racked and left to complete its malolactic fermentation and maturation in oak barriques.

Maturation

100% matured in barriques (228 litre) for 12 months imported privately from a Burgundian cooper. Tighter grain oak is preferred, with longer seasoning and deeper, slower toasting. New oak - 18%, 2nd fill - 45%, 3rd fill - 37%.

Bottled: July 2011