

## Circumstance Merlot 2009

Pencil shavings, spice and tobacco flavours on the nose. Elegant, bright acidity with juicy fruit on pallet. Great length with fine tannins on finish.

Pairs well with Waterkloof raised lamb.

**variety :** Merlot | 100% Merlot

**winery :** Waterkloof

**winemaker :** Werner Engelbrecht

**wine of origin :** Stellenbosch

**analysis :** alc : 14.0 % vol    rs : 2.1 g/l    pH : 3.62    ta : 4.8 g/l

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

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

**in the vineyard :** The south-west 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 2009 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 12 years old. Production was approximately 6 tons/ha.

### 2008/9 GROWING SEASON

The Winelands stayed in the grip of winter well into September of 2008. Very good rains during the winter ensured that soil retained enough moisture to sustain the vines through the long growing season. Together with cool weather during spring, it caused vineyards to ripen the grapes later than normal. Cultivars that ripen early to mid-season were 2 to 3 weeks later than normal. The long, cool growing season ensured that grapes had a high natural acidity and lots of flavour. Late ripening varietals like Cabernet Sauvignon ripened on time.

**about the harvest:** The harvest was short and very intense and lasted for about 5 weeks. The Merlot vineyards were harvested towards the end of February.

**in the cellar :** Grapes were destemmed and fermented with naturally occurring yeasts, in open top wooden tanks. Punch downs (twice a day) were used during fermentation to maximize colour and tannin extraction. The wines spent a total of 35 days on the skins to help integrate the tannins and stabilize the colour. The skins were separated from the juice through a gentle basket pressing. All the wine went through malolactic fermentation in barrel. The wine was then aged in new (30%) and 2nd fill (70%) French barrels for 20 months. We make the wine as naturally as possible, with no additions of acids or enzymes allowed.

