

Ernie Els Proprietor's Blend 2009

This has to be the finest vintage of the Proprietor's Blend yet! A cool, concentrated ripening season resulted in an elegant yet resolute wine of great demeanor. The nose is finely tuned cassis, a touch of earth, graphite and meat spice. The silky structure is built like a sky-scraper, towering over a full-bodied, deeply textured palate. Cabernet Sauvignon and the other Bordeaux cultivars produce a classic feel, with 21% Shiraz adding a spicy, savoury complexity. The finish is once again extremely fine and elegant.

variety : Cabernet Sauvignon | 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Shiraz, 5% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec, 5% Petit Verdot

winery : Ernie Els Wines

winemaker : Louis Strydom

wine of origin :

analysis : alc : 14.0 % vol rs : 2.6 g/l pH : 3.71 ta : 6.2 g/l

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

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

ageing : Relish opening in 5 to 10 years to expose its full potential.br /

in the vineyard : The 2009 vintage

After a late start winter 2008 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

The Proprietor's Blend is a blend of all the six varieties cultivated on the property. These vineyards grow on the warm north-facing slopes of the Helderberg region within the Stellenbosch appellation. All six varieties thrive under these conditions and deliver rich, full-bodied red wines. With an altitude of approximately 250 metres above sea level and the cooling influence of the Atlantic Ocean just 15 kilometres away, the ripening period is extended by up to 3 weeks.

about the harvest: The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning. February / March 2009 - 35°Brix average sugar at harvest

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. Each variety was separately vinified and blended after the 18 months of maturation.

Cooperage: Aged for 18 months - 70% in 300 litre French oak barrels & 30% in 300 litre American oak barrels.

Production: 2,300 x 6 x 750ml cases

