

## Laibach Claypot Merlot 2011

Deep dark colour. Very complex and classic flavours on the nose with some dark chocolate, wild berry and some cedar wood evident. Full bodied with a very well balanced palate. It is almost like biting into a wild cherry pie, with lots of flavour and some beautiful juicy tannin. Wood is evident but at this stage it complements and adds even more dimensions. A wine for any special occasion and a true reflection of this lovely grape.

**variety :** Merlot | 100% Merlot

**winery :** Ladybird Vineyards

**winemaker :** Francois van Zyl

**wine of origin :** Simonsberg-Stellenbosch

**analysis :** alc : 14.0 % vol rs : 2.2 g/l pH : 3.59 ta : 5.6 g/l

**type :** Red **style :** Dry **taste :** Fruity **wooded** **organic**

**pack :** Bottle **closure :** Cork

**ageing :** Enjoy 2 - 15 years after vintage.

**in the vineyard :** This wine forms part of the pinnacle of the Laibach range. The first Claypot released was the 2005 vintage, exclusively for the very prestige and famous Hakkasan restaurant in London. Made in very small quantities between 2 and 31 barrels (depending on vintage) this wine reflects our true terroir and winemaking philosophy. All serious winegrowers know that the best Merlot grapes are grown on clay soils. This grape in South – Africa is a big challenge but we believe that we consistently produce one of the best Merlots in South – Africa. Why? We are passionate about this grape varietal. We believe that we have some of the best soils for this grape and that our viticultural practices are very good. We do not use irrigation and everything is farmed organically without the use of any fertilizers, pesticides or insecticides. Roots must grow and look for water therefore adding depth and flavour to the wine. Cooler soils also allow the tannins, colour and sugar levels to ripen more in harmony with each other. Everybody is giving Merlot some stick in South – Africa, but we believe in this varietal.

**about the harvest:** The approach for this wine is all about attention to detail. The least vigorous plants are marked early in season to avoid any shaded fruit. It is always harvested separately and will usually ripens about 10 days earlier than the rest of this block. The grapes are all handpicked and are cooled overnight.

**in the cellar :** The grapes for this wine are from one older block on the farm. With organic practices we have found that we get smaller bunches, smaller berries and therefore a natural smaller crop. Merlot tends to crop too much in South – Africa, especially when irrigation practices are used. We pick everything by hand and some batches are cooled to 0 degrees overnight. We use a vibrating sorting table after destemming to remove all unwanted green material. This is very important for us. Some batches will get a 3 - 5 day "cold soak" in small closed fermentation vessels. Some batches will go straight to small open top fermentation tanks for a quick warm fermentation. Skin contact can be from 5 - 40 days in total vintage permitted. Press juice and wine might be separated in some vintages. Malolactic fermentation is done mostly in stainless steel after the wine is racked, sulphured and moved to small French oak barrels. We use at the moment everything from one small cooperage in France. The 2011 spend 12 months in 100% new oak and then racked and removed to a larger oak barrel for further maturation and ageing. The wine was bottled unfiltered in May 2013.

