

Noble Hill Merlot 2011

A deep, clear colour with intense aromas of black cherry, dried plum, and spice. The palate is focused with lingering black fruit and caramel derived from oak contact.

variety : Merlot | 100% Merlot

winery : Noble Hill Wine Estate

winemaker : Bernard le Roux

wine of origin : Simonsberg-Paarl

analysis : alc : 14.2 % vol rs : 3.3 g/l pH : 3.42 ta : 6.1 g/l

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

pack : Bottle **size :** 750ml **closure :** Cork

ageing : Enjoy confidently through 2021.

in the vineyard : Our Merlot is grown on a single vineyard which has produced fantastic wines vintage after vintage since being planted in 1998. The clay-rich soil on which the vineyard is established has a high gravel content which facilitates even drainage. The block is somewhat of an enigma, ripening almost perfectly evenly without significant intervention or irrigation management.

Despite being an easy vineyard to manage, we give this vineyard a great deal of attention and love, especially with respect to leaf-plucking. This is done manually two to three times per year in order to expose the berries to sun earlier and reduce herbaceous and under-ripe character in the wine. Late ripening in the 2010 vintage gave the grapes ample time to develop soft tannins and a deep, rich texture.

in the cellar : This is where it gets tricky! Merlot is certainly not an easy wine to make. We strive for a balance between deep, luscious flavours and austere, elegant structure. This yields a wine which is ready to compete in the big leagues and breaks the traditional conception of Merlot as an also-ran. Fermented on the skins, the wine is gently pressed and left to 225 litre French oak barriques for 18 months. It is racked twice during this period, and ultimately bottled with minimal intervention.

