

Ernie Els Big Easy Red 2012

The Big Easy 2012 is a melange of perfumed varieties such as Viognier, Cinsaut, Grenache and Mourvèdre, built on a pillar of Shiraz and supported by a dollop of Cabernet Sauvignon. Notes of chai tea, French perfume, bramble berries and bacon fat create a spellbinding, complex bouquet. The pallet dances between a rich strawberry fruit and savoury roast beef sensations. Immensely pure and juicy in a medium body, it finishes with salty dark chocolates and a pomegranate swirl. All coaxed by round, yet dry tannins and a long finish.

variety : Shiraz | 61% Shiraz, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Grenache, 4% Cinsaut, 4% Mourvèdre, 4% Viognier

winery : Ernie Els Wines

winemaker : Louis Strydom

wine of origin : Western Cape

analysis : alc : 14.57 % vol rs : 3.8 g/l pH : 3.66 ta : 5.7 g/l

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

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

ageing : It is immediately exotic and pleasurable young but will remain tasty for 5 years or more.

in the vineyard : The 201 vintage

The 2012 harvest is emerging as a particularly good one, both in terms of quality and volume. Although it's still early days, we do foresee that this vintage has the potential to be of a very high standard. After fairly stable climatic conditions throughout the second semester of 2011, a cold and wet spring slowed down activity in the vineyards. We experienced warm weather in late December which led to some vigorous foliage growth. The bunch counts revealed an above average figure so "green harvesting" was needed in January. (Green harvesting is the removal of immature grape bunches for the purpose of decreasing yield and thus maintaining intensity on the remaining fruit.) It's particularly pleasing to report that there was no apparent disease in the vineyards. Moderate to warm temperatures from the second half of February were prevalent as expected, but cool conditions throughout March slowed the ripening of the vines and assisted in improving phenolic ripeness of the grapes. There were some early rains during April but luckily 95% of the crop had already been harvested by this stage. In general, there is much excitement about the 2012 vintage, a specific characteristic being optimal ripeness levels achieved at lower sugars, thus in-turn resulting in lower alcohol levels.

About the vineyard

Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon was sourced from the Helderberg region within the Stellenbosch appellation. Grenache and Cinsaut were picked from rare, 40 year-old vines from Piekenierskloof on the West Coast. Mourvèdre and Viognier were delivered from neighbouring Stellenbosch vineyards. The diversity of the various sites shows beautiful balance on the palate.

about the harvest:

The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning. On the sorting table, all excess stalks and rotten berries were removed carefully by hand.

Dates: February & March, 2012. 25.5° Brix average sugar at harvest

in the cellar : Grape bunches were gently destalked with a Bucher de-stalker and lightly crushed. 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 10 - 16 days before pressing. Each variety is matured separately (micro-vinified) in oak barrels before blending



and eventual bottling.

Cooperage: Aged for 14 months – 80% in 300 litre French Oak barrels & 20% in 300 litre American Oak barrels

Production: 25 000 x 6 x 750ml cases