

## Ernie Els Merlot 2013

The 2013 Merlot is a touch lighter than the brooding and rich 2012. The nose is soft and inviting with driedprovençal herbs, cherries, plums and just a hint of dark bitter chocolate. The palate is medium-bodied with sweet,red fruits and further complexity from notes of cigar-box and wet earth. The fruity tannins are fine and somewhatdelicate, adding a silky texture to a long spicy finish. Supple and fragrant now, it will age for 5 years or perhapsmore.

**variety :** Merlot | 100% Merlot

**winery :** Ernie Els Wines

**winemaker :** Louis Strydom

**wine of origin :** Stellenbosch

**analysis :** alc : 14,50 % vol rs : 2.6 g/l pH : 3.56 ta : 5.8 g/l

**type :** Red **style :** Dry **body :** Medium **taste :** Fruity

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

**ageing :** Tantalising and delicious in its youth, the 2013 will age well for 5 years or more.

**in the vineyard :** The 2013 harvest season started a week later than usual. Prolonged winter conditions continued in some areas up until September, followed by a cool spring which delayed bud burst by 7 to 14 days. The cold, wet weather conditions ensured even bud burst as well as the accumulation of water supplies that would allow the vineyards to cope with the warmer conditions later in the season. The vineyards had good growth in ideal dry weather conditions during the flowering and berry-set periods - although this also occurred later than usual. Early cultivars ripened later but an extremely dry and warm December resulted in the late cultivars ripening as normal. Ideal weather conditions during the harvest season prevailed with moderate day-time temperatures, cool evenings and no prolonged spells of rain or heat waves; this all impacted positively on grape quality and established good colour and flavour. It was also a particularly healthy year and diseases, pests and rot only occurred later in the season, while the warm and dry weather conditions together with effective disease and pest control resulted in minimal losses.

**in the cellar :** On the sorting table, all excess stalks and rotten berries were removed carefully by hand. 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 - 300 litre French Oak barrels (20% new)

Production:3 950 x 6 x 750ml cases

Sustainability Initiative: I.P.W. (Integrated Production of Wine) Certified

