

Ernie Els Merlot 2014

The 2014 Ernie Els Merlot abounds with ripe plums, figs and cherry. It is soft and juicy on the entry with a delicate floral expression that follows from nose to palate. Medium bodied and fine, an earthy complexity adds depth, while notes of Swiss chocolate give a luxurious feel. The firm tannins are balanced by a red-berry crunch and a long savoury finish.

variety : Merlot | 100% Merlot

winery : Ernie Els Wines

winemaker : Louis Strydom

wine of origin : Stellenbosch

analysis : alc : 14.75 % vol rs : 3.2 g/l pH : 3.65 ta : 5.9 g/l

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

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

ageing :

Delicious now, it will age well for another 5 years.

in the vineyard :

The 2014 Vintage

Initial vineyard growth was slow due to late cold fronts experienced during August 2013 followed by cool, wet weather at the start of the growing season leading to some challenges. Mid-November created challenging spraying conditions and limited access to the vineyards. As a result, downy mildew led to crop losses early on in the season in some of our red wine areas. Thereafter, favourable climatic conditions improved for flowering and good berry set ensued. The high rainfall in mid-November did however spark vigorous growth which required extra input to ensure superior grape quality and disease prevention through good canopy aeration and sunlight exposure. Widespread rainfall during early January increased pressure on viticulturists to prevent disease and rot. Ideal dry and moderate conditions reigned during ripening in January and mid-February after which a warm period accelerated ripening and resulted in great pressure on harvest intakes. The wine potential looks promising in terms of quality. Moderate weather conditions during the harvest season contributed to intense red wines.

About the Vineyard

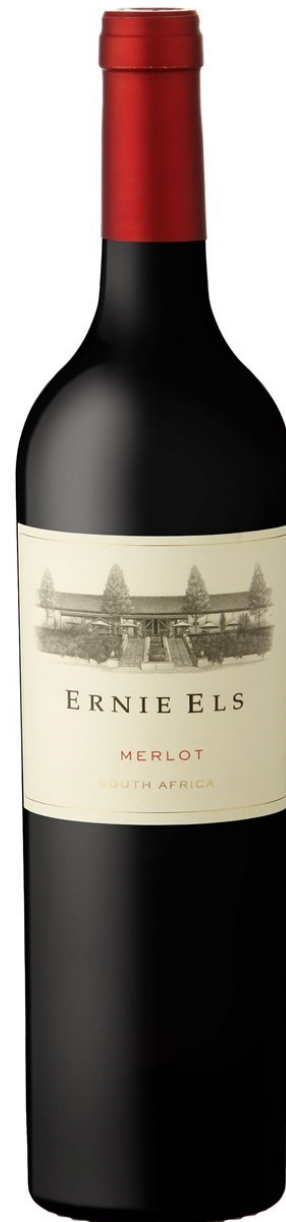
The Merlot vineyards grow on the warm north-facing slopes of the Helderberg region within the Stellenbosch appellation. The Hutton Clovelly soils contain a high gravel content which offers rich middle palate weight giving this wine exceptional depth and fruit purity. With an altitude of approximately 250 metres above sea level together with the cooling influence of the Atlantic Ocean just 15 kilometres away, this extends the ripening period by up to 3 weeks resulting in lovely phenolic ripeness.

about the harvest:

The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning.
March & April 2014. | 24.6° Brix average sugar at harvest

in the cellar :

On the sorting table, all excess stalks and inferior berries were carefully removed. 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. The wine is matured in French oak barrels before eventual bottling.



Cooperage: Aged for 14 months - 300 litre French Oak barrels
Production: 3 950 x 6 x 750ml cases

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