

Ernie Els Merlot 2015

The medium bodied 2015 Merlot is a reflection of a truly great vintage, exuding excellent ripeness along with freshness and poise. This wine manages to balance succulent red fruits with a savoury complexity; whiffs of tomato leaf, earth, tobacco and plums almost reminds one of Bordeaux. The palate is more sweet-fruited and juicy however, with cherries and strawberries taking centre stage. The tannins are soft like milk chocolate, supported by firm acidity and a long finish. Perhaps the finest vintage to date!

variety : Merlot | 100% Merlot

winery : Ernie Els Wines

winemaker : Louis Strydom

wine of origin : Stellenbosch

analysis : alc : 14.64 % vol rs : 3.1 g/l pH : 3.64 ta : 6.3 g/l

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

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

ageing : p Delicious now, it will age well for another 5 years./p

in the vineyard : The vintage will be remembered as one of the driest and earliest in years, with a somewhat smaller wine grape harvest promising exceptional wines. Good reserves were accumulated during the post-harvest period in April and May, after which leaf fall generally occurred at the right time. A cold, wet winter led to the accumulation of sufficient cold units for the full breaking of dormancy, which contributed to even bud break. Warm weather in August resulted in earlier bud break, after which a warm, dry and windy summer kept vineyard growth under control and accelerated ripening by approximately two weeks. The dry weather also led to one of the healthiest seasons in years, with almost no losses due to diseases or rot.

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: Smaller berries, as well as warm temperatures leading up to harvest time led to good colour and intense flavour in this year's red wines. Although somewhat smaller, this was one of the best, if not the best, harvests in years.

The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning.
February and March 2015. | 24.6° Brix average sugar at harvest

in the cellar : The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning. On the sorting table, all excess stalks and inferior berries were carefully removed. Grape bunches were gently destalked. Fermentation took place in both 3-ton and 7-ton, open-top stainless steel tanks. The wines were pumped-over and punched-down manually 3 to 5 times per day ensuring maximum colour extraction from the skins. After primary fermentation the wines was left on skins for an additional 7 - 14 days before pressing. Each variety is maturated separately (micro-vinified) in oak barrels before blending and eventual bottling.

Cooperage: Aged for 14 months - 300 litre French Oak barrels

Production: 5000 x 6 x 750ml cases

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

