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Asara Speciality Collection Avalon 2012

Fresh, juicy coconut, generous fruitcake spice and red berries show on the nose. Fresh red berries and copha predominate at the mouth-watering entry; full bodied and rich in fruitcake spice and notes of dried fig.



variety : Pinotage | 63% Pinotage, 37% Shiraz
winery : Asara Wine Estate and Hotel
winemaker : Asara Winemaking Team
wine of origin : Stellenbosch
analysis : **alc :** 15.5 % vol **rs :** 9.8 g/l **pH :** 3.41 **ta :** 6.4 g/l
type : Red **style :** Dry **body :** Full **taste :** Fruity **wooded**
pack : Bottle **size :** 750ml **closure :** Cork

Asara's Speciality range is an eclectic collection of wines that represent a twist on regional specialities. Niche and unique, the range reflects the quality of an estate whose vinous history dates back to 1691.

At Valpolicella in Italy, a unique winemaking style has developed over the centuries. Known as Amarone, the process involves desiccating premium quality grapes; the aim being to capture the intense colour and flavour found in the skins. Asara Avalon is a twist on Amarone that takes advantage of elements of South African terroir. Because of the abundance of warmth, the grapes are both dried on the vines, and in the cellars as it happens in Italy. This contracts a process of months into a matter of weeks, and maintains a natural cycle that protects the health of the grapes. The grapes are grown at altitude; the Pinotage at the highest point on the farm. The coolness extends the ripening, producing thicker skins and therefore healthier grapes. It also contributes elegance to the finished wine; a profile for which the Amarones are famed.

in the vineyard : The highest block on the farm, at 210m, is host to premium Pinotage at 16 years of age, with tiny yields of 3-4 tons per hectare. The vineyard is planted to deep Tukulu soil, both moisture- and nutrient rich. The Pinotage vines are less stressed and thus produce fruit that is fresher and more elegant, in the newer Pinotage style. The rows are planted northwest to southeast, attracting twice-daily doses of sunshine on the grapes. For the remainder of the day the canopy shades the grape, further allowing lengthened ripening. The highest are used for the Avalon, these vines are aged 11-15 years and yield at 4 tons per hectare. By withdrawing irrigation during ripening, the grapes very slightly dehydrate, concentrating spiciness and flavour. The row direction is southeast to northwest, producing a similar sunshine effect to the Pinotage grapes.

in the cellar : The grapes remain on the vines until they reach 23-24.5° Balling; at which point the stems are pinched to cut off moisture supply. The bunches remain on the vine for a further three weeks, reaching 30-31° Balling and weighing one third less due to the loss of water. The grapes are harvested in the coolness of morning into small lugs, sorted, and rushed to the cellar. A second whole bunch sorting ensures the utmost quality with minimal grape handling. After a gentle crushing, the juice is fermented at cooler temperatures, and the skins are submerged thrice daily. The wine is matured in old 300ℓ barriques, 80% French and 20% American, with 30% new barrels, for three years. Spontaneous malolactic fermentation takes place, contributing complexity to the wine.