

CIRCUMSTANCE

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2022



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

A cross between Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon is the most famous red wine grape in the world and is celebrated as the king of the reds because of its great structure. With its small, thick-skinned berries, it is rich in colour and tannins.

The block used for our Circumstance Cabernet Sauvignon is on the north-west facing slopes of the Schapenberg, at an altitude of about 270 and 300m above sea level and a mere 5 kilometres from the Atlantic Ocean. Strong south-easterly winds help control growth and crop yield. Soils are of decomposed granite origin with fine sand/loam topsoil and medium-size stones, helping with both drainage and moisture retention. Production was approximately 4 tons/ha. In other words, packed full of flavour!

At Waterkloof we strive to produce balanced, characterful wines by adhering to traditional regenerative farming methods. Our soils are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own organic compost. We do not fight nature, we harness it. The result is honest, terroir-driven wines – true reflections of natural circumstance.

A GENTLE HAND

We hand-harvest according to taste and spend a lot of our time in the vineyards to see how the flavours develop. Grapes were destemmed, hand-sorted and placed into our open-top wooden fermenters via gravity. The natural fermentation started spontaneously- utilising the wild yeasts present on the fruit.

A combination of soft punch downs and delistages were used during fermentation to ensure a soft and slow colour and tannin extraction. The wines spent about 30 days on the skins to help integrate the tannins and stabilise the colour. The skins were separated from the juice via gravity flow and gently pressed in a basket press. The wine went through malolactic fermentation in barrel and was then aged in 15 % new, the rest second and third fill French barrels for 33 months. We never fine any of our reds so that the grapes are honestly and purely expressed in the wine. Only sulphur was added and no other additions, such as tartaric acid or enzymes, were allowed.

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2021 / 2022 GROWING SEASON

A cool season with moderate weather conditions during the 2022 harvest. This gave the vine the opportunity to reach full phenolic ripeness and develop complex flavours.

The current harvest quality is dependent on the previous Winter conditions. The 2021 Winter started early and saw proper leaf fall during the month of May. The rest of the Winter was ideal and cold but we still did not have enough rain on the farm.

On the Waterkloof farm we decided to focus on a minimum tilling approach to try and build up the natural carbon percentage in the soil. Christiaan, our farm manager, started putting chipped plant cuttings down in between the vines going 30 to 40 cm high. Over this he would spray earth worm teas which will break the plant material down into a carbon source.

The legume and wild oats cover crop will be rolled flat- only cleaning in between the vines with the aim of preserving the carbon in the soil and increasing the water holding capacity.

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Due to a cold Spring budding was delayed by 2 weeks on average. Once flowering started the vine caught up and was only about 5 days later than the average year.

Luckily during flowering, we did not see strong winds and had an even berry set in the area. From December on the vine's growth was accelerated by the warmer growing conditions. We had a few heat peaks in December and in January.

As far as I remember this was one of the longest harvests! We started getting into full swing from around the second week of February and received our last grapes in on the 23rd of March. The quality looks good- we saw little rot and reached proper phenolic ripeness at lower sugar levels leading to fresher wines with slightly lower alcohols.

TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA LANGENEGGER

I enjoy the finesse of this cooler climate Cabernet Sauvignon with soft notes of pencil shavings, leather, dark fruit and some dark chocolate. The palate shows good structure with superbly refined tannins and lovely length. Our Circumstance Cabernet Sauvignon is a perfect companion for a variety of dishes such as T-bone steak on the braai (barbeque) or slow-cooked lamb shanks.

THE NUMBERS (10,000 bottles produced)

Alc: 14% **RS:** 1 g/l **TA:** 5.2 g/l **pH:** 3.6