Le Riche

STELLENBOSCH | SOUTH AFRICA

HARVEST REPORT 2013

The season started out with a wet and cold winter that lasted well into August, resulting in a delayed budburst. Cool weather after an even budding slowed the initial growth, but accelerated as the season warmed up during September. Early in November we had a wet and windy flowering period. This brought a poor fruitset and was followed by a dry and warm November. A perfect storm for small berries. Accelerated growth in this period had us working overtime to get the vines under control and the sun exposure optimal.

And then came December, the hottest in 48 years and extremely windy. So much so, that some vineyards toppled over. Our saving grace was the two week late season and larger canopies due to the November vigour. This prevented sunburn damage and gave some shading to the bunches during the hot days. Heat during this pea berry fase of Cabernet does not cause too great damage and increases colour and tannin development. However, this did accelerate the vintage.

January through March gave us timely rain showers mixed with warm days and cool nights. These are ideal conditions for acid and flavour development. Veraison was even and quick, resulting in homogeneous berries and bunches which made our harvest decision a little easier. We picked slightly later than usual, but the flavours were well developed with good acids and structure.

Truly a classic Stellenbosch Cabernet vintage with medium to high ageing potential.

Christo le Riche
Cellarmaster