Le Riche

STELLENBOSCH | SOUTH AFRICA

HARVEST REPORT 2017

2017 was a vintage where extremes created perfection. The winter produced lower than average rainfall (the second dry year in a row) with slightly elevated temperatures during July. A warm spring resulted in an even budburst for most of our Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards, but with a slow steady shoot growth due to a cool September and October.

Late October and early November had intermittent rain and wind during the flowering period that resulted in light loose bunches with small berries. A warm and dry December optimised the berry flavour development, along with great tannin and structure built into the berries. No significant heat waves and cool evenings helped secure good acid levels. The perfect combination for developing colour and flavour in the green berries.

Veraison started in early January on the Cabernets, with significant rain showers in late January and early February. After the dry spring, the timing of the rain was perfect and sustained the vines until harvest. It also alleviated the irrigation demand in a season when our dams were running dry. A moderate February with cool evenings preceded the Cabernet picking in early March. This protected the acidity and ensured great phenolic ripeness. With no significant heat waves the combination of moderate temperatures, cool evenings, drought and wind helped to develop incredible fruit density and flavour depth, backed up by a very good tannin structure.

Expect the wines from 2017 to show amazing fruit depth and concentration that is balanced out by a natural acidity. A truly great vintage to compete with 2015 for the best of the millennium, thus far.

Christo le Riche
Cellarmaster