Le Riche

STELLENBOSCH | SOUTH AFRICA

HARVEST REPORT 2021

The 2021 season has produced some outstanding wines. The season started out with a good winter with sufficient rainfall that filled the water tables and restored the water reserves we lost during the drought. Our spring was cool and wet but cleared up by the time the Cabernet started to bud 10-14 days late, resulting in an even budding with moderate growth before flowering.

The weather during flowering was excellent and continued into January with ideal moderate conditions, low wind speeds and sufficient water. The canopies were lush and healthy, and we had optimal tannin and flavour development during this period. However, the intermitted rains did place significant fungal pressure on the vines, and we lost the grapes in a block on the Helderberg due to powdery mildew damage.

Verasion was smooth and even in a cool January, and flowed into a moderate, but slightly late harvest period. We started picking on the 26th of February and ended on the 8th of April. Conditions remained dry and moderate, and we were able to pick at a steady pace, ensuring optimally ripe fruit came into the cellar. Large fires in the Jonkershoek Valley did create some sleepless nights, with one of our Reserve blocks suffering significant smoke damage, rendering the fruit unusable.

The wines retained excellent acidity, with full ripe flavours balanced by firm ripe tannins. The total tannin count was the highest we have seen since 2011, which bodes well for the ageability of the vintage. Expect wines with outstanding colour and structure that will age well.

Christo le Riche

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Cellarmaster