Le Riche

STELLENBOSCH | SOUTH AFRICA

HARVEST REPORT 2022

The Stellenbosch region experienced an excellent winter; steady cold accumulation took place from the end of May to the end of August. Winter rainfall was evenly distributed over the winter months, coinciding with long-term averages for the second consecutive year after the drought.

Due to the good winter cold, budding was particularly even, albeit approximately 7 – 10 days later than the norm. While the early spring was particularly cool and dry, the growing season progressively grew wetter and cooler which impacted the flowering and set quality. Exceptional summer rainfall resulted in lush canopies with high growth rates. We had our hands full keeping the canopies open and under control. Due to low temperatures, vine phenology consistently lagged the long-term averages by approximately 10 – 14 days.

Extremely high temperatures were experienced in January, with almost three times the number of hours above 35°C more than the previous year. These conditions – on the back of a cool season – gave many vineyards a shock that counteracted the normal accelerating effect of heat on ripening. The season thus maintained its snail pace established earlier, despite a relatively hot and dry ripening period. Irrigation was important after the wet spring as the vines had not established a root system to handle the dry conditions.

Harvesting started 1 week late on the 4th of March, but with a bang. We filled up the cellar before 20mm of rain fell on the 12th. These rains were much needed after the hot and dry January and February and provided a week with no picking to press off the first batches of the season and extend the hangtime on our vineyards. Thereafter we continued picking until the 28th of March.

The wines have developed well with ripe black fruit and a softer tannin structure. In general, we had good concentration of flavours and balanced acidity. This is an approachable classic Stellenbosch vintage.

Data referenced from Vinpro

Christo le Riche

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Cellarmaster