Le Riche

STELLENBOSCH | SOUTH AFRICA

HARVEST REPORT 2023

2023 was a season of two halves. We began with a dry winter and spring, which provided ideal conditions for an even budburst and moderate growth through to flowering and early fruit development. This early warmth laid the foundation for excellent colour and tannin development in the berries—key elements in producing a high-quality vintage.

However, December brought a series of thunderstorms with heavy rainfall, posing challenges for viticulturists. On the upside, the rain replenished the parched soils and supported an early veraison. Another storm in early February, followed by warm weather, accelerated ripening and pushed the vintage forward. Harvest began with great momentum on the 23rd of February—about 10 days earlier than usual. These initial blocks delivered fruit that was powerful, ripe, and bursting with flavour.
But then the rains returned. Following the full moon in the first week of March, the season took an abrupt turn into autumn, much earlier than expected. We filled up the cellar with 50% of the crop before a succession of storms slowed harvesting to a near standstill.
Deciding when to pick became increasingly difficult. Yet, thanks to a skilled team, consistent sampling, and a reliable forecast, we managed to safeguard fruit quality and finished picking on the 28th of March. Early signs suggest a promising vintage, despite the challenges.

Christo le Riche
Cellarmaster