

minimalist wines

BY SAM LAMBSON



STARS IN THE DARK

APPELLATION | Cape Agulhas

ALCOHOL | 14%

ELEVAGE | 12 months in 228L and 300L Neutral French Oak

ON SKINS | 14 days

HARVESTED | 28 MARCH 2022

BOTTLED | 19 APRIL 2023

VINEYARD

"Some of the best things in life emerge from tough times and dark places".

True in wine, as in life, this message appears on the bottle's back label to reflect the resilience of the Syrah vines that grow in at the southern tip of Africa. Conditions are extreme on the harsh, exposed slopes of Cape Agulhas and, as always, we're astonished and delighted by what nature delivers.

THE BLEND

All the fruit was harvested from two cool climate, low-altitude Syrah parcels (50m above sea level), just 8km from the stark and blustery coast. Facing North West, one is 22 years old planted on Clay and the other (23 years) on Koffieklip soils. As always, we let the sites do the talking, so the fruit was matured for 12 months in neutral 228L and 300L French Oak.

THE VINTAGE

An exceptional, cool late vintage. The growing season was off to a slow start with bud break two weeks later than normal. Cool weather and high wind speeds during set and flowering resulted in some uneven set (millerandage) which was later removed with a keen eye on the sorting table. Strong canopy growth required careful management and several extra passes through the vines. A cool early growing season was broken by lengthy heat waves in Jan and Feb, before returning to cool fair weather in the lead up to harvest. The prevailing dry conditions allowed for extended hang time on the vines, contributing to plush ripe tannins and real flavour intensity.

WINEMAKING

We harvest in the cool, early hours of the morning, into 14kg Lug boxes and transport grapes back to the cellar in refrigerated trucks where they are allowed to cool overnight. After gentle foot-stomping and crushing (one third whole-bunch for this vintage), natural fermentation gets underway, at its own pace, in a combination of open and closed fermenters. Once complete, we macerate gently with a single, daily pumpover / punchdown.