

ANWILKA

STELLENBOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA - ANWILKA

2017 marked an even later start to harvest than usual. A key factor for the late start was the cooler summer evenings in Stellenbosch which allowed for an extended ripening season, a position most favourable for us at Anwilka. Together with the windy and dry conditions we experienced in the build up to harvest, we were able to receive excellent quality grapes.

Following on from last year, we experienced an even drier winter. However, the windy conditions during this growing season gave us smaller concentrated berries in looser bunches with near perfect fruit quality. Thanks to one much needed downpour towards the end of January the vines were able to pull through to the maturation phase.

These dry conditions prevail to this day, due to the terrible drought we are experiencing in the Western Cape. With very little irrigation water available during the ripening period we had to strategise on how to manage the growing season based on soil readings, crop loads and the various stages of ripening. Going forward water availability will become one of the deciding factors in choosing our plants and rootstock as well as how the vineyard is trellised and managed thereafter.

In order to make premium quality wine, we try to improve our pickings in the vineyard year on year. A strict selection of the best grapes in the vineyard ensures that the winemaking process is less invasive, going through the vineyards up to 4 times – a process unheard of for red wine. Pickings are done by hand and happen early in the morning, just before sunrise when the grapes are at their coldest. Upon arrival in the cellar the sorting process happens immediately to preserve the flavours and freshness of the grapes.

Our maiden vintage of Malbec was first to come into the cellar on the 21st of February. A true privilege to be the first vintner to witness the journey from planting to working with them in the cellar. The Syrah took time to reach optimal ripeness only coming into the cellar in the early days of March. Cabernet Sauvignon was next to arrive followed by Petit Verdot in mid-April, late in comparison to previous years.

In the cellar, the extraction process is careful and calculated, sometimes tasting up to 3 times a day in order to respect the grapes. After completion of alcoholic fermentation, the free run juice was drained off overnight and the skins pressed the next day using a traditional basket press. Different press fractions are kept separate and used for fine-tuning and finishing the blends at a later stage. Secondary malolactic fermentation took place in either new 400 litre French Oak barrels or stainless-steel tanks.

The Shiraz is showing great elegance and perfume, with subtle spice and some peppery notes. The Cabernet Sauvignon is delicate with a great mid-palate structure whilst the Petit Verdot is dense and inky – all these put together will certainly produce stunning wines for 2017.

