

Anwilka Harvest 2018

The thought on all of our minds leading up to vintage was the severe drought that has hit the Western Cape. There were many questions as to what actions to take in the vineyards, if any at all. When looking at the budding and veraison dates in the build up to vintage, we were given an early indicator that our harvest would be later than usual.

Anticipating these dry and hot conditions, the decision was made to expose young berries to sunlight as soon as possible – thus making them robust enough to withstand the harsh sun, preventing them from sunburn and raisining during hot spells. We also made the canopy of the vines smaller to limit transpiration – keeping them trimmed regularly, close to the bunch zone and free of unnecessary vegetative growth. Over the past few years, we have been weening the vines off irrigation water, irrigating less and less. By green harvesting early in the season, we were able to control our yield and improve the quality of the grapes. Our cover crops were flattened in order to make a natural mulch to conserve water during the growing season. The results of these actions were positive, giving us healthy and homogenous vines.

The build up to vintage was dry – winter provided sufficient cold weather in time for pruning; spring saw some unusual early wind; summer was drier than average with some regular and much needed rainfall in February and March.



When the flavours of the grape, the tannins in the skins and pips, are optimally ripe the decision is made to pick. Harvest started on the 5th of March with Malbec arriving at the cellar first, followed by Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon and last was Petit Verdot coming in on the 17th of April. Picking happened in the early hours of the morning ensuring cool grapes arrive at the cellar. This preserves the flavours and freshness. Bunches are hand sorted in the vineyard removing any unwanted berries and leaves. Grapes are transported in crates directly to the cellar where they are processed immediately. Bunches are destemmed and berries are sorted again by hand before being put into their fermentation vessel.

The extraction process is careful, gentle and varies from vintage to vintage. Sometimes tasting up to 3 times a day in order to respect the grapes. After alcoholic fermentation is completed, the free run juice is drained off over night and the skins are pressed in a traditional basket press the following day. Different press fractions are kept separate and used for fine tuning the red blends at a later stage. Secondary malolactic fermentation takes place in either new 400-liter French oak barrels or stainless-steel tank.

The fruit quality for our 2018 vintage was exceptional – great structure in the skins, small berries with great concentration of flavours. Whilst it is still early days, with lots of work still to come - we can look forward to some elegant and full-bodied wines from this dry vintage.