Ashbourne

SANDSTONE 2020

WINE OF ORIGIN HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY



SOIL: Table Mountain Sandstone derived soil.
ALCOHOL: 13.00%.
ACID: 7.00 g/l.
PH: 3.32.
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.89 g/l.
MATURATION: Chardonnay in Ceramic Eggs, Sauvignon blanc in Terracotta Amphorae, Semillon in neutral oak barrels - for 5 months.
YIELD: 7.24 hl/ha, 1.1 t/ha
PRODUCTION: 283 cases
BLEND COMPOSITION: Sauvignon blanc 51%, Chardonnay 24%, Semillon 25%.
FRUIT ORIGIN: Hemel-en-Aarde Valley 100%.
RELEASE DATE: September 2020
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This wine is vegan.

Growing Season

Harvest was a touch earlier than usual, beginning in the first week of February. Budding was even and complete, helped by a fortuitous two days over 30 Centigrade in mid-September, but it was unusually late in the Sauvignon blanc. The weather at flowering was benign, if a little wet. Ripening was a touch uneven - more so in the various Sauvignon blanc vineyards. Overall the year was wetter than the previous few years (with a total annual rainfall of 849mm for calendar year 2019). A particularly wetter than average October and January created downy mildew pressures, which became odium and later botrytis pressures, not helped by high humidity and early morning dew. These were however satisfactorily held at bay with organic treatments. The average maximum temperatures for Dec, Jan, Feb, Mar were exactly equal to our long-term average of 25 Centigrade (the long-term equivalent for Burgundy for Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep is 24.8 Centigrade), so on our measure, the vintage was cooler than 2019 and equal to the celebrated 2009 and 2015 vintages. A standout feature of the 2020 vintage was phenolic ripeness at lower alcohol than usual, combined with low sugar to alcohol conversions for the fermentations. A highly positive situation. The wines have a marked mineral purity and saline quality. A very exciting outcome despite weather challenges.

Wine Style

This is an innovative blend that captures the most beautiful possible expression of the sandstone-derived soils in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. Free by design of excessively dramatic varietal fruit, the focus of the wine is on bright, minerality, salinity and vibrant natural acidity, coated by a full and gentle viscosity derived from a unique endemic yeast combined with wild yeasts, and the method of vinification, not from high alcohol. Nearly three decades of family experience have gone into this blend.