Ashbourne

Pinotage 2016

WINE OF ORIGIN HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY



SOIL: Low-vigor, stony, clay-rich, shale-derived soil
ALCOHOL: 14.1%
ACID: 6.0 g/l
PH: 3.53
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 2.10 g/l
BARREL MATURATION: 100%
BARREL AGING: 10 months in 400 liter barrels, 6 months in neutral 2000 liter foudre
MALOLACTIC: 100%
1ST FILL: 40% 2ND FILL: 60%
WOODING: 100% 400 and 2000 liter French oak barrels
TIGHT GRAIN: 100%
FRENCH COOPERS: Francois Frères 100%
FRUIT ORIGIN: Hemel-en-Aarde Valley 100%
PRODUCTION: 224 cases of 12 bottles equivalent

Growing Season

2016 was another unusually early and short harvest - almost exactly the same timing as 2015. But as is wonderfully the case with nature, the character of the 2016s is surprisingly different than the 2015s. For the wine lands in general, the story was of excessive heat and extreme dryness. But this was **not** the case for our appellation, the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. Close proximity to the cool South Atlantic kept the maximum temperatures in line, and we also benefitted from timely rain from the southeast, which seldom reaches the warmer inland areas. January was quite a bit warmer than our long-term average (the same as for 1998 and 2011), but it was not drier than average. And the crucial month of February was wetter than average without being warmer - as was March. Our main dam was almost full at the end of harvest. A relatively warm December, followed by a hot January was probably the main factor in making 2016 an early year. High humidity did create some anxiety - less over downy mildew but more over oidium - so it will be remembered as a more challenging year than 2015, but the resulting wines will perhaps be seen as more typical of our style for the classicists and purists.

Wine Style

From the maiden release in 2001, this benchmark wine has redefined South Africa's own red grape variety, Pinotage, with its classic, refined styling and unique complex character. This is a wine unlike anything else, intense, rich, and savory with a beautiful underlying minerality.

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