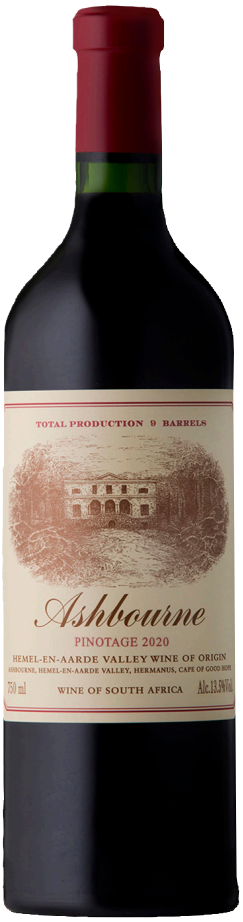
# Ashbourne

## PINOTAGE 2020




WINE OF ORIGIN HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY

SOIL - Low-vigour, stony, clay-rich, shale-derived soil
ALCOHOL: 12.90%
ACID: 5.20 g/l
PH: 3.59
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.20 g/l
BARREL MATURATION: 100%
BARREL AGEING: 10 Months in 400 litre barrels, 10 months in neutral 2000 litre Foudre
1ST FILL: 40% 2ND FILL: 40% 3RD FILL: 20%
WOODING: 100% 400 litre and 2000 litre French Oak Barrels and Foudre
TIGHT GRAIN: 100%
FRENCH COOPERS: Francois Freres 100%
YIELD: 1.10 tons/ha, 7.15 hl/ha
FRUIT ORIGIN: Hemel-en-Aarde Valley
PRODUCTION: 210 cases of 12 bottles equivalent

## 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 than for Pinotage. 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. Pinotage yields were significantly down on the already low yields of 2019. 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. So despite lower alcohol, the Pinotage is deep, and intense, with a beautiful fine-grained structure. A year with weather challenges that did not prevent our team from achieving an exciting outcome.

## 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 savoury with a beautiful underlying minerality.

**Green Practices:**
Certified Sustainable *(Integrated Production of Wine, Biodiversity & Wine Initiative Champion)*

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