

2018 Lower Duivenhoks River Chardonnay

RANGE: GPS Series

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 100% Chardonnay made from Dijon clone CY95.

WINE OF ORIGIN: Lower Duivenhoks River, Western Cape, South Africa.

TOTAL VINEYARD PRODUCTION: 3.05 tons from a single vineyard block of Chardonnay.

OVERVIEW: During the year, I have the opportunity to visit a number of areas outside of Elgin. Occasionally, I come across something so fascinating that it deserves a closer look. In 2016, I discovered a small parcel of Chardonnay grapes growing on limestone soils – a rarity in the Western Cape. With limestone often touted as beneficial for Chardonnay grapes, it made sense to grasp this opportunity with both hands. The GPS Series is testament to these special places and celebrates them.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 28th February 2018 Brix at Harvest: 21.0

SEASON: The trend of below average winter-rainfall, begun in the winter of 2015 persisted in the winter of 2017. Thus, soils were drier and cover crops less established as the 2018 season began. However, this must be seen in the context of the cooler climates such as the Lower Duivenhoks River. Whilst rainfall was reduced, there was still enough going into season. However, crop sizes were smaller due to less groundwater being available for the tap roots. In addition, wet, cool and windy weather during flowering meant less fruit was pollinated. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are especially sensitive to a poor flowering environment and crop loads in some of the Chardonnay were down to a measly 18 hl/ha. During the vegetative period, there were some warm days but no damaging heatwaves and on average the growing season was cooler resulting in smaller bunch sizes and decent acidities. As an upside of the lower yield, the smaller berries delivered high aromatic intensity and good colour for the reds. In what seems to have become a trend, we again experienced sporadic showers during the growing season, providing some relief in terms of water, vapour pressure deficit and temperature. The cooler weather meant slower ripening, and this allowed the vines to accumulate the important secondary metabolites that are the hallmark of noble cultivars interacting with well-matched terroir.

WINEMAKING: Grapes were hand-picked in the early morning, placed into small lug baskets and tipped directly into a press before being gently whole-bunch pressed up to a maximum of 0.6 bar or until a low juice recovery of 615 litres per ton was obtained using our new Willmes Sigma 5 press. The juice gravity-flowed directly to barrel (no pumps were used at all) without settling. The unclarified juice had no enzymes or yeast added to it and therefore underwent spontaneous fermentation until dry, with malolactic discouraged. The wine rested in barrel for 4 months prior to judicious sulphuring and a further 7 months' maturation in barrel before racking, blending and bottling.

BARREL SELECTION: A small number of artisanal coopers were selected, all from Burgundy and only French oak was chosen. Importantly, this wine was micro vinified as a separate batch. Over the years we have developed an algorithm to ascertain which coopers work best and how many new and used barrels are utilised. In 2018 43.6% was new oak; 100% using 228 litre barrels.

ALCOHOL: 13.09 %

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 2128 bottles were produced.

TASTING PROFILE: Restraint, minerality, freshness of fruit and a chiselled edge reflect limestone's soil properties. This 2018 reveals clean, bright aromas of lemon blossom, wet chalk and powdered stones. Penetrating intensity, animated acidity with a rich mid-palate weight; this wine has purity of fruit – orange peel, yellow cling peaches and grapefruit peel – with complexing oatmeal and lemon cream biscuits to crème fraîche textures and a long finish.



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