

2018 Kershaw Elgin Syrah

RANGE: Clonal Selection

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 100% Syrah made up of clones SH9c & SH22.

WINE OF ORIGIN: Elgin, Western Cape, South Africa.

TOTAL VINEYARD PRODUCTION: 7.9 tons selected from 5 small parcels of Syrah.

HISTORY: In 2012, owner Richard Kershaw MW established Richard Kershaw Wines to create clonally selected, site-specific, cool climate wine paradigms from apposite noble grapes i.e. ones with the ability to produce world-class examples. SA's coolest wine district, Elgin Valley, reflected these principles benefitting from higher altitude, ocean proximity, specific cloud cover sequencing, high cold units and a large diurnal range, enabling the germane grapes, Chardonnay and Syrah and more recently Pinot Noir, to show a sense of place.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 19th March – 3rd April 2018

Harvest Brix: 22.3 – 25.1

SEASON: The trend of below average winter rainfall, which began in the winter of 2015 persisted in the winter of 2017. Thus, soils were drier and cover crops less established, however this must be seen in the context of Elgin, being one of the most reliable areas with regards rainfall and the storage thereof. So even a reduction in our normal pattern still left us much better off than the rest of South Africa's wine areas. What did cause a reduction in our seasonal yield was wet, cool and windy weather during flowering, however, this affected the earlier ripening varieties and thankfully Syrah was largely spared as it flowered in early November.

There were some hot days but no damaging heatwaves and on average the growing season was cooler resulting in smaller berries. 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. There were however reports of hail damage from some parts.

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: The grapes were handpicked under autumnal skies into small lug baskets and then manually sorted on a conveyor before the stems were removed. The destemmed berries fell onto a vibrating table in order to remove jacks and substandard berries before dropping uncrushed into a small 500kg conical hopper and being forklifted into open-topped fermenters. The grapes underwent a 3-day maceration before spontaneous fermentation began. A gentle pigeage program was charted and the grapes remained on skins for 21-29 days. The wine was then racked to barrel under gravity and the remaining pomace basket-pressed. Malolactic then proceeded in barrel followed by a light sulphuring and 17-month maturation. No finings were necessary, and the wine was simply racked and bottled unfiltered.

BARREL SELECTION: A small number of artisanal coopers were selected from Burgundy and Rhone, with only French oak chosen. Importantly, each clone and soil type were micro vinified as separate batches. Each batch used an algorithm that we have developed to ascertain which coopers work best and how many new and used barrels are utilised. Overall, the average in 2018 was 45.4% new oak with 47% in 228 l; 38% 500 l, and 15% breathable eggs.

ALCOHOL: 13.74%.

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 11882 bottles, 50 Magnums & 2 Double Magnums.

TASTING PROFILE: Mid cherry red, the nose exudes raspberry, black plum, green pepper and hints of lavender. A supple entry, structural elegance with freshness and a cooling mid-palate where the tannins appear seamless yet still firm and the acid supportive but not too lively. This is a polished wine already brim-full of fruit, classic black pepper and sweet spices. A real depth of flavour with a dry, smooth extended finish will reward those who cellar this vintage for the next 5-8 years.



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