

Wine Information Sheet: Kershaw Deconstructed Syrah Range by Richard Kershaw MW

History: Richard Kershaw MW set up Richard Kershaw Wines (RKW) in 2012. RKW was established 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. South Africa's coolest wine district, Elgin Valley, reflected these principles benefitting from higher altitude, ocean proximity, specific cloud cover sequencing, high cold units, and a broad diurnal range, enabling the germane grapes, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah, to show a sense of place.

Overview:

The inspiration for these three Deconstructed Syrah stems from my belief that the Elgin region boasts credentials that make it world-class. In bolstering these regional credentials, my mandate has been to prove Elgin has both a signature grape that is synonymous with the region as well as particular 'terroirs' (mesoclimates) within its demarcated boundary that reflect regional distinctions. To fully comprehend this, it is necessary to dig deeper into the DNA that makes up our region.

To facilitate this, I have decided to make these three Syrah wines that I select from a sub-region of Elgin from a specific vineyard and an individual clone. Importantly, this is an ongoing story that will unfold over the coming years.

The Wines: The 3 wines include:

Groenland Bokkeveld Shale SH 9c Sourced from a single parcel in the Northern part of Elgin the 9c clone when planted in cooler areas is known to produce wines that are well scented, delicately balanced and savoury; medium in weight, lively in acidity with fine-grained tannins they show a purity of fruit with flavours towards white pepper, violet/lavender, Victoria plum and iodine. The Bokkeveld Shales tend to amplify the perfume, and give density to the structure whilst adding freshness and precision to the wine.

Lake District Cartref SH 9c Sourced from a single parcel (split between clone 9c and clone 22) in the Western part of Elgin. The 9c clone when planted in colder areas is known to produce wines that are well scented, delicately balanced and savoury; medium in weight, lively in acidity with fine-grained tannins they show a purity of fruit with flavours towards white pepper, violet/lavender, Victoria plum and iodine. The Cartref soils tend to exude freshness and energy with lively acidity giving precision to the wine.

Lake District Cartref SH22 Sourced from a single parcel adjoining the 9c (above) in the Western part of Elgin the 22 clone produces fuller, well-coloured yet finely structured wines. They tend to be more concentrated as yields are low with black fruit, black pepper, and meaty notes.

Winemaking: The grapes are handpicked under autumnal skies, the grapes are picked into small lug baskets and then manually sorted on a conveyor before the stems are removed. Destemmed berries fall onto a vibrating table to remove jacks and substandard berries before dropping into a small 500kg conical hopper and forklifted into open-topped fermenters. The grapes undergo a 3-day maceration before spontaneous fermentation begins. A gentle *pigeage* program is charted, and the grapes remain on skins for between 20 and 27 days. The wine is then racked to barrel using gravity flow (no pumps are used at all), and the pomace is basket pressed. Malolactic conversion then proceeds in barrel followed by a light sulphuring and 15-18 months of maturation. No finings are generally necessary, and the wine is simply racked and lightly filtered before bottling with each bottle bearing a unique reference number.

Barrel Selection: A small number of French artisanal coopers are selected from Burgundy and Rhone of which a high proportion is 500L in size. Up to 50% of the oak is new with the remainder split into second and third-fill barrels.

Serving the Wine:

Optimum temperature: This Syrah should be opened at 17°C having been stored in a temperature-controlled cellar that is kept constantly at 15-16°C. This will allow the wine to slowly polymerise over time and gain complexity.

Service Vessel: Whilst the wine is perfectly delicious poured from the bottle, in its youth, it will merit decantation into a suitable decanter (I personally use the Riedel Syrah Decanter) so that the wine can open up properly.

Optimum Glasses: I prefer using the 4400/30 Hermitage or 416/30 Syrah glasses from Riedel with their wider rims as they have been specifically designed to encapsulate the more subtle flavours and finely textured, gently oaked style of Syrah.

Optimum Drinking: Whilst it would be ideal to let these wine complex over the next few years, if more than 1 pack has been bought, it would be worth comparing all 3 wines every 6 months and then comparing them further with the following vintage.

Food Pairings: Look at pairing the Deconstructed Syrahs with intensely flavoured meats exhibiting umami flavours that will bring out the fruit in the wine. Fat makes the tannins taste smoother so fatty meats like duck, pork and various type of sausage work well as does hard cheese. Spicing the dish using cumin and pepper will bring out the fruitiness of the wine as will the use of Asian flavours such as plum sauce. My suggestions for dishes include rich beef casseroles; grass-fed pan-fried fillet steak with wild chanterelles; paprika-roasted leg of lamb or even lamb shawarmas; peppercorn encrusted tuna or Cumberland sausages and mash and grilled eggplant. For Sunday lunch go with the roast topside of beef with wholegrain mustard served with Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes and carrots in thyme and honey.

Tasting Profile: Although each wine will have an accent on its location, overall, the wines should show a subtle, precise style built on fine tannins that educe harmony, and freshness with flavours of black-skinned fruit, iodine and ground white peppercorns.

