

2020 Walker Bay Pinot Noir

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 100% Pinot Noir made from French clone PN777.

WINE OF ORIGIN: Walker Bay, Western Cape, South Africa.

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 2050 bottles.

HISTORY: During the year, I have the opportunity to visit a number of areas outside of Elgin. Occasionally, I come across something so fascinating it deserves a closer look. In 2018, I discovered two small parcels of Pinot Noir grapes grown on Bokkeveld Shale in a protected lee of the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde valley and the Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge- an area renowned for Pinot Noir. It made sense to grasp the opportunity with both hands and the GPS Series is testament to these special places and celebrates them.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 17th - 18th February 2020.
Brix at Harvest: 22.4 - 24.6.

SEASON: In 2020, we had milder weather at the beginning of August, which led to early budburst, yet milder weather into spring meant flowering proceeded a little later. Wind was a problem reducing the amount of fertilisation, so bunch sizes were destined to be smaller - no bad thing for quality. Summer was blustery and drizzly, leading to better vegetative growth but more challenges for downy mildew pressure, especially on the young bunches and leaves. The Cape South Coast experienced a downpour of over 90mm in early January. This rain helped further replenish soil reserves, but it also mitigated the need for irrigation during the season. The summer rain caused a considerable ripening slowdown, potentially leading to a later harvest. The flavour concentration is phenomenal and some of the best I have ever experienced. In addition, the Pinot Noir shows better colour and tannins than in 2019, with an exquisite flavour spectrum and extraction.

WINEMAKING: The grapes were handpicked into small lug baskets and 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 small 500kg open-topped fermenters. The grapes underwent a 3-day maceration before spontaneous fermentation began. A gentle delestage program was charted, whereby all the juice ran from the tank daily, to allow any unwanted lees to settle out and for the cap to completely collapse before running the juice back over the crumbled pomace. The grapes remained on skins for 14-15 days before being run off their skins to tank with the remaining marc gently basket pressed. The wine settled overnight before being racked by gravity into barrel. Malolactic proceeded in barrel followed by a light sulphuring after which the finished wine spent around 10-11 months undergoing maturation. During this period each and every barrel was tasted every 6 weeks and notes and scores logged to better understand our knowledge of clonal, soil and barrel selection. No finings were used, and the wine was simply racked and lightly filtered prior to bottling.

BARREL SELECTION: A small number of artisanal coopers were selected, all from Burgundy and only French oak was chosen. Importantly, each clone and soil type was micro-vinified as two separate batches. Each batch used an algorithm that we developed to ascertain which coopers work best and how many new and used barrels were utilised. Overall, the average in 2020 was 24% new oak; 76.1% 228 l and 23.9% 500 l.

ALCOHOL: 12.5%. **RESIDUAL SUGAR:** 2.3 g/l **TOTAL ACID:** 6.3 g/l **pH:** 3.24

TASTING PROFILE: Striking light coral-red-orange colour. A beguiling aromatic profile with heady ripe red plums, angelica, dragon fruit and freeze-dried strawberries. A super light zesty oak accentuates and complexes the nose further. Soft entry on the palate, juicy texture that morphs as the wine opens up further to a more fleshy and gentle pull on the mid-palate from stem inclusion. Immaculate lines with an energetic acidity and fine yet grippy tannins match the fleshier flavours - those of strawberry jelly powder, sweet, red plums, and tinned strawberries - and underpin its dry intent. The finish is extended with an impression of panna cotta, red cherry and gentle oak spices.



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