



— Blue Lady 2013 —

Varietal Information

The Warwick Blue Lady comes from a single vineyard on the farm called Block 14. The grapes are 100% Cabernet Sauvignon of the clone CS 46A. It is a South African clone that is known to give medium production yield, but a very well balanced wine with a lot of varietal character. It produces notes of berries, herbs and a touch of nuttiness. This wine is a barrel selection of the best of the best produced from this block. Only the top 11 barrels from Block 14 were chosen.

Total vineyard production

The vineyard was cropped at the very low yield of 4.86 tons per hectare, to produce a wine of such intense concentration. The soil in this block is mainly Oakleaf with some Hutton and Clovelly soils and some decomposed granite. Oakleaf soils are well drained soils which are luvic, and red and yellow in colour. They are structureless and contain minimal clay. The Hutton soils are more red/ brown in colour and are apedal soils which contain less than 15% clay. These soils are all remnants of well weathered old land sediments and are all particularly well drained.

History

The Cabernet Sauvignon wines from Block 14 were planted in 1997 by the late Stan Ratcliffe. Cabernet was his preferred variety as he found it to produce outstanding quality when grown in the soils of Warwick. "Cabernet Sauvignon is for people that don't just like red wine, they simply love it!"

Vintage

The 2013 growing season was full of surprises. There were gale force winds, heat spikes and plenty of rain during the harvest. Certainly challenging conditions for making wine.

The Cabernet Sauvignon showed the most promise in this unusual season. Late rain during harvest helped to supplement the dry land vineyards with much needed moisture. This led to slow ripening and phenolic ripeness at low sugars, translating into fresher aromas and riper berry characters with the bonus of lower alcohols.

2013 was not a recipe year for making wine. As head oenologist Nic van Aarde said: "We were challenged by Mother Nature and together with the viticulturist Ronald, we had to think out of the box. After tasting the wines I think we have come out tops and that 2013 will be a year to remember."

Winemaking

Cabernet Sauvignon excels on the decomposed granite soils of Warwick Estate. A cool ripening period led to this 16 year old single block South West facing vineyard being handpicked late into March 2013. The grapes were handpicked in the early morning and gently crushed,

destemmed and hand sorted on a vibrating sorting table. A 5 day cold-soak was done after which spontaneous fermentation was allowed to start. A few days into fermentation a yeast culture was added and a long cold fermentation was done with daily pump-overs and two rack-and-returns. No post-maceration was done due to the perfect tannin balance at the end of the fermentation. A light pressing was done after which the wine underwent Malolactic fermentation in stainless steel tanks. The wine was gravity-fed to 225 litre tight grain, medium and light toast French oak barrels for ageing. The wine was racked twice during this period. The wine was bottled with a light filtration and kept in bottle for 12 months before release.

After extensive tasting evaluation, only the best 11 barrels of Cabernet were chosen for the Blue Lady

Barrel Selection

A selection of barrels was chosen, as well as a selection of coopers, in order to give complexity to the wine.

Tight grain French oak barrels in 225-liter size were used for 26 months. 50% of the oak used was new.

The barrels were mostly from Allier and Vosges forests in France. And the chosen coopers were: Demptos, Taransaud, Sylvain and Boutes.

Tasting Profile

If you love a thoroughbred of a Cabernet, this is the wine for you. It's a monster chocolately, eucalyptus, Ribena -soaked delight cloaked in a big, comforting blanket of fine grained French oak. It is plump and brooding with hints of leather, spice and a jar of Marmite thrown in for good measure and has a long and happy life ahead of it

Ageing Potential

This wine can be drunk now, and often is, as most wine drinkers want the instant gratification that this Cabernet will offer right now. If you drink it young, it will offer beautiful primary fruit aromas of succulent plumminess and a generous dose of classic smoky oak. But if you really wish to reward yourself with one of the great Cabernets of the world, allow it to age a little. Start trying it at 5 years old and keep trying it every year until it's past the 15 year mark. Those primary aromas will develop, like the well groomed lady she is and will offer elegance and lusciousness and tannins as silky as you can imagine

Food Match

When drinking this wine young, a more robust meal would work well. A slow cooked lamb shank, cooked in a bottle of Blue Lady would top the charts, or a wild mushroom risotto. As the wine ages, more subtle dishes could really bring out the silky tannins and inviting elegance of the wine. Perhaps an Osso Bucco or merely a rare beef fillet with olive oil and coarse salt.

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