



— Three Cape Ladies 2013 —

History

The Pinotage block 20 was planted in 1994 and is NE facing and planted on Richter 101/14 rootstocks.

Richter 101/14 was developed by Professor Alexis Millardet with the assistance of the Marquis de Grasset in 1882 in France. It is not exactly known when it was brought to South Africa but it was certainly one of the first rootstocks to be imported. Its parentage is *Vitis riparia* and *Vitis rupestris*. Its natural tendency is to penetrate the roots very deep into the soil and it is excellent in gravelly soils. It is one of the traditional rootstocks of the Stellenbosch area.

The Shiraz block 11 was planted in 1996 on a NE facing slopes. It is fully irrigated and is planted on both Richter 101/14 and 99 rootstocks.

The Cabernet block 9 is SW facing. It was planted in 2005 on both Richter 101/14 and 99 rootstocks.

Vintage

The 2013 growing season was full of surprises. We had gale force winds, heat spikes and loads of rain during harvest. "Wow! Talk about challenging conditions for making wine." Says Nic van Aarde, head winemaker.

The Pinotage ripened in the second and third week of February at the same time as the Cab. We had some long days and late nights to try and get harvested at optimal ripeness. The Old Bush Vine block showed its characteristic cedar wood and red cherry characters providing great blending component's for our Three Cape Ladies blend.

Our Shiraz vineyard was one of the last parcels to come in for the season. This 17 year old block has produced a very dark and spicy wine with licorice and black pepper hints. Another great component for the Three Cape Ladies.

Cabernet Sauvignon showed the most promise in this unusual season. Late rain during harvest helped to supplement dry land vineyards with much needed moisture. This led to slow ripening and phenolic ripeness at low sugars. Translating into less vegetal aromas and riper berry character's with the bonus of lower alcohols.

2013 was not a recipe year for making wine. We were challenged by Mother Nature and the Warwick viticulturist Ronald, as well as Nic, the winemaker 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

The Pinotage vineyard ripened slightly earlier than normal due to an early February 2013 heat wave that accelerated ripening. The judicious use of irrigation helped the vines not to stress over this period. The grapes were picked in the early morning and cold settled for three days before being inoculated with yeast. The cap was worked very

lightly and 2 rack-and -returns were done. The tank was pressed at 5 Brix when the winemaker felt there was enough extraction and the fruit profile was leaning toward the blackberry spectrum. The Shiraz came in 2 weeks later. A 5 day cold soak was done with a slow wild yeast fermentation bringing out the profound spicy character of this old vineyard. Punch downs were done 3 times a day with a single wetting of the cap close to dryness. No post maceration was done and the skins were pressed lightly and Malolactic fermentation was done in tank. The Cabernet Sauvignon was cold soaked for 7 days and inoculated. A warm short fermentation was done with a post maceration of 1 week on the skins. This polymerised the tannins and gave way to a powerful wine with notes of forest floor, herbs and plum.

All the components were aged separately in French oak barrel for 18 months and meticulously blended by our winemaking team before bottling. The Pinotage component increased significantly in 2013 and this was the strongest blending component in the wine. The Shiraz component stayed constant and the Cabernet Sauvignon component was less than previous years giving the structural support to this juicy Cape Blend.

Barrel Selection

The wine had 24 months in 225l French oak barrels of which 22% was new oak, 9% was 2nd fill, 21% was 3rd fill, 48% was 4th fill. This allows the fruit of the wine to be the hero without the oak creating a dominance. The older barrels allow micro-oxygenation in the wine without adding any oak flavour.

Tasting Profile

A classy Cape blend that oozes as much style as it does history. The first Cape blend in South Africa - originally launched in 1997 - taking you on a pioneering taste trip filled with heady red fruit notes of wild strawberry, freshly picked mulberry and cherries, then overlaid with a densely briary smack. All that fruit being said, you won't miss the library of leather, licorice and just a lick of tobacco that shows it can be as demure as it is extravagant.

Ageing Potential

This is a wine that is perfect to drink young while the plums are jumping out of the glass and the spice is at stratospheric levels, but if you age it, the savouriness will start to make the fruit more subtle, and a well worn leather chesterfield, stained with licorice will emerge. It can easily age for up to 10 years, if you are patient enough to wait.

Food Match

A Cape blend and a good old char grilled steak are a perfect match, but try it with a fiery chimmicurry sauce on the side and it takes you to a new level. Or slow cooked pork belly with extra crispy crackling, with a salty, Hoisin sauce for dipping.

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