

2017 Lower Duivenhoks River Chardonnay

RANGE: GPS Series

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 100% Chardonnay made from Dijon clone CY95

WINE OF ORIGIN: Lower Duivenhoks River, South Africa

TOTAL VINEYARD PRODUCTION: 3.46 tons from a single vineyard block of Chardonnay.

OVERVIEW: During the year, I have the opportunity to visit a number of areas outside of Elgin. Occasionally, I come across something so fascinating that it deserves a closer look. In 2016, I discovered a small parcel of Chardonnay grapes growing on limestone soils – a rarity in the Western Cape. With limestone often touted as beneficial for Chardonnay grapes, it made sense to grasp this opportunity with both hands. The GPS Series is testament to these special places and celebrates them.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 16th February 2017 Brix at Harvest: 21.4

SEASON: Whilst 2017 experienced a cool winter to enable good vine dormancy, the rainfall was low and followed similar conditions felt in 2015 and 2016. Budbreak took place in ideal warm sunny conditions whilst flowering was a touch earlier than normal; strong blustery winds meant pollination took longer to complete. As a result, berry set was uneven leading to some smaller berries that despite a lower yield did have good concentration of flavours. Despite expecting an early harvest an unusually cool December slowed down ripening whilst some January rain during veraison helped nourish the soils and more importantly, helped the vine focus on grape ripening rather than foliage & root growth. Harvest took place under blue skies in mid-February. The net result of the drier year is that the grapes had decent natural acidity, achieved steady phenolic ripeness and plenty of intense fruit flavours.

WINEMAKING: Grapes were hand-picked in the early morning, placed into small lug baskets and tipped directly into a press before being gently whole-bunch pressed up to a maximum of 0.6 bar or until a low juice recovery of 590 litres per ton was obtained. The juice gravity-flowed directly to barrel (no pumps were used at all) without settling. The unclarified juice had no enzymes or yeast added to it and therefore underwent spontaneous fermentation until dry, with malolactic discouraged. The wine rested in barrel for 4 months prior to judicious sulphuring and a further 7 months' maturation in barrel before racking, blending and bottling.

BARREL SELECTION: A small number of artisanal coopers were selected, all from Burgundy and only French oak was chosen. 40% of the oak was new with the remainder split into 2nd fill barrels, 228 litres in size.

ALCOHOL: 13.07%

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 2700 bottles were produced, each individually marked on the label.

TASTING PROFILE: Restraint, minerality, freshness of fruit and a chiselled edge reflect limestone's soil properties. This 2017 vintage reveals clean, bright aromas of lemon blossom, wet chalk and powdered stones. Penetrating intensity, animated acidity with a rich mid palate weight, this wine has purity of fruit (orange peel, yellow cling peaches and grapefruit peel) lemon cream biscuits and crème fraiche textures with a long finish.



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