

# ESSENCE DU CAP MERLOT 2021

At Fleur du Cap, we are not constrained by farm, vineyard or climate when crafting wines – allowing our winemakers the freedom to choose the finest grapes from the best vineyards in the Cape and to produce highly awarded, richly layered wines of great complexity and finesse.

#### THE VINEYARDS

The grapes were sourced from vineyards in Stellenbosch and Durbanville. The vineyards were planted in 1992, 1999 and 2000 at altitudes ranging from 150m to 250m above sea level and producing 8 to 10 tons/ha yields. Supplementary irrigation was given towards the end of the growing season. The vines were trellised according to the 5-wire hedge system, with leaf breaking done in the bunch zones early on to expose bunches to direct sunlight. During veraison, a green harvest was done to ensure even ripening. Pest and disease control were implemented according to South African subjective IPW standards.

#### THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were picked by hand at 23° to 24° Balling in mid-February. In the cellar, the grapes were carefully destemmed, crushed and inoculated with selected yeast. To preserve fruit flavours, the fermentation temperature was controlled at 25°C. Colour and tannin extraction was performed by pump-overs and evaluated daily to prevent the incorporation of harsh tannins. After fermentation, the wine was drained off and the skins pressed with the hard pressings excluded. Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally. The wine matured for 12 months with a combination of French and American oak and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>nd</sup> fill barrels.

### WINEMAKER COMMENTS

The wine is ruby red in colour with aromas of cherries, plums, and hints of cigar box, underlined by elegant oak spices. On the palate, this full-bodied wine is well-balanced and velvety soft with abundant layers of fruit and accessible tannins that linger on the finish.

## **FOOD PAIRING**

This wine is the perfect partner for spicy Mediterranean dishes, oxtail stews and chicken curries.

ANALYSIS	
Alcohol	13.48 vol %
Residual Sugar	2.84 g/l
Total Acidity	6.13 g/l
рН	3.36

