



ALTO ROUGE

2016

Winemaker: Bertho v. d. Westhuizen

Appellation: Stellenbosch

Grape varietals: Cabernet Franc (28%) Shiraz (23%) Merlot (22%) Cabernet Sauvignon (21%) and Petit Verdot (6%)

Winemaker's comments

Colour: Dark ruby red.

Bouquet: Lead pencil shavings, crushed red fruit and a hint of chocolate dominates the nose.

Taste: Elegant red fruit flavours on the palate, backed-up by soft, elegant tannins.

General: A stylish princely wine with excellent aging potential.

Food pairing: Excellent on its own or served with simply-flavoured red meat, game and duck dishes.

Chemical analysis:

Alcohol: 14% by vol

Residual sugar: 3.6 g/l

Total acidity: 5.6 g/l

pH: 3.55

Extract: 34 g/l

Background

Alto, situated on the slopes of the Helderberg Mountain in the Stellenbosch district, dates back to 1693 when it was part of a much larger farm called Groenrivier (Green River), granted to a free burgher by Governor Simon van der Stel. In 1919 the owner of the farm, Hennie Malan, sold off half the land to his brother-in-law and set about planting vines on his remaining portion, focusing exclusively on red varieties. He named the farm Alto, a reference to its altitude (some slopes rise as high as 500m above sea level) and his striving for excellence. The cellar was built in 1920.

Alto has 93 hectares under vines. The trellised vineyards cling to the high granite slopes, ideal for the cultivation of red wine varieties. Harvesting at Alto traditionally only starts at the end of February / beginning March due to the cooling influence of the southerly breezes during this time. This ensures gradual ripening of the grapes and contributes to the development of delicate flavour in the fruit.

Vineyards

The 5 varietals were handpicked from trellised vineyards which grow in Hutton and Glenrosa soils. The north and north-west facing vineyards are situated against the slopes of the Helderberg Mountain, some 100m to 500m above sea level, and benefit from the cooling effects of the afternoon maritime breezes during the ripening season.

At the time of picking the vines were between 5 and 24 years old and yielded 6 to 10 tons per hectare.

Winemaking (winemaker: Bertho v. d. Westhuizen)

The 5 grape varieties used to make up this blend ripen at different times and were harvested at 24° to 26° Balling. Each varietal was vinified separately and fermented on the skins for over seven days at 25° to 27°C in closed stainless-steel tanks. The fermenting mash was pumped over several times a day.

After malolactic fermentation the component wines were aged for 14-16 months in a combination of first-, second- and third-fill barriques, mostly of French and American oak, before the desired blend was made.