



# 2007 Luipaardsberg Merlot



## Background

Nine leading vineyard owners in the Durbanville district joined forces with Distell to create Durbanville Hills with the aim of promoting the regional individuality of this prime wine-growing area. The striking Durbanville Hills cellar sits proudly atop a series of rolling hills with magnificent views of Table Mountain and Table Bay - the very geography that lies at the heart of what makes the wines so unique. The Durbanville ward is officially considered one of the Cape's two coolest wine regions, thanks to the sea breezes that drift inland from False Bay and Table Bay and the late afternoon mists that bathe the slopes. These conditions are ideal for the slow ripening of the grapes, allowing them to develop their full flavoured and intense character. Grapes are sourced only from the shareholder growers, all of whom farm within the limited appellation of Durbanville. Meticulous crop control applied to these vineyards further limits yields and promotes concentration of varietal flavour, encouraging a process of natural selection. Cellarmaster Martin Moore uses highly advanced cellar technology to ensure optimal extraction of colour and flavour.

Sustainable practices includes the maintaining of the International Environmental Standard ISO 140001, treating of waste water back to irrigation quality and all vineyards subscribing to IPW (Integrated Production of Wine) growing practices, designed to sustain natural resources. In addition the farmers protect 220ha of endangered Renosterveld as part of the Biodiversity Wine Initiative (BWI).

The name of this wine derives from the earliest description of the hills of Durbanville. To the 17th century Dutch settlers the indigenous flora with its gold and dark green spots, set against the slopes, recalled the exotic-looking leopard they encountered after arriving at the Cape.

## The vineyards (vineyard consultant: Johan Pienaar)

The grapes for this single-vineyard wine were sourced from trellised vines grown in deep, red soils on the valley floor of the Klein Roosboom farm. The vineyard, established in 1991, produces no more than 6 tons per ha.

## The winemaking

The grapes were harvested by hand at 25° Balling in March at full ripeness, when showing concentrated flavours of mulberry and mint. After 24 hours of cold soaking, the must was fermented on the skins (between 26°C and 28°C) in closed, specially designed auto fermenters until dry. During this period the maximum fruit, colour and tannin extraction from the skins was made possible through very soft, continuous timer-regulated pump-over cycles. To soften the texture, the wine was left on the skins for two weeks after the fermentation period. Controlled malolactic fermentation took place in tank after which the wine was matured for 24 months in tight-grained new French oak, before bottling.

## Winemaker

Martin Moore with Wilhelm Coetzee

## Colour

Ruby red.

## Nose

Typical cool climate flavours of mint, dark chocolate, coconut ice and oak spices laced by sweet cherries on the nose.

## Taste

Rich and full-bodied with soft tannins and berry flavours balanced by sweet cherry on the palate.

## Food pairing

An ideal partner to osso bucco and other veal and red meat casseroles.

## Alcohol

13,82%

## Residual sugar

2,7g/l

## Total acidity

6,5 g/l

## pH

3,61

## Extract

31,30