



2010 Merlot



**DURBANVILLE
HILLS**

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 14001, 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 210ha of endangered Renosterveld as part of the Biodiversity Wine Initiative (BWI).

The vineyards (vineyard consultant: Drikus Heyns)

The grapes were selected from vineyards on the valley floor where vines are less prone to water-stress as the soils are generally deeper with better water retention than higher up on the hills. The constant presence of wind ensures that the canopies stay fairly small, a phenomenon that we link to better fruit and structure in the wines. We have learned that overlapping bunches tend to colour poorly and great care was taken to ensure even fruit positioning.

The winemaking

The grapes were hand harvested between 24° and 25° Balling from middle February to the middle of March and vinified separately. 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. After the wine was separated from the skins controlled malolactic took place in stainless steel tanks. The wine was matured for 12 months using predominantly French oak barrels, utilising a small percentage new oak together with older wood as well as wood alternatives. This is done to prevent over wooding and by doing so preserving the elegance of our cool climate fruit.

Winemaker

Wilhelm Coetzee and
Martin Moore

Colour

Dark ruby

Nose

The wine holds a concentration of berry fruit, cherry and hints of mint and spicy undertones on the nose.

Taste

Medium bodied wine with silky tannins, dark chocolate and fruity elegance on the mid-palate.

Food pairing

An ideal partner to cottage pie, roast chicken with sage and onion stuffing, steak and kidney pie and stilton cheese.

Alcohol

14.16%

Residual sugar

2.09 g/l

Total acidity

5.7 g/l

pH

3.52