



- **Country:** South Africa
- **Region:** Darling
- **Vintage:** 2017
- **Colour:** Red
- **Grape Variety:** Shiraz, Mourvedre, Grenache and Cinsault
- **ABV:** 14%
- **Bottle Size:** 75cl
- **Closure:** Screwcap
- **Style:** Well balanced and spicy
- **Drink With:** Roast lamb

## GERRARD SEEL: WINE MERCHANTS TO THE TRADE SINCE 1984

01925 819695

[wine@gerrardseel.co.uk](mailto:wine@gerrardseel.co.uk)

[gerrardseel.co.uk](http://gerrardseel.co.uk)

Gerrard Seel Limited  
31 Melford Court  
Hardwick Grange, Woolston  
Warrington  
WA1 4RZ

## DARLING CELLARS THE CAPEMAN RED BLEND

<https://gerrardseel.co.uk/products/darling-cellars-the-capeman-red-blend>

This is a well balanced wine that is simply very drinkable!

From dry land bush vines, this red blend offers a wide range of flavours including red plums, cherries and crushed black pepper.

On the palate it is smooth and juicy with a long, lingering finish.

It is a blend of 42% Shiraz, 30% Mourvedre, 14% Grenache and 14% Carignan.

A real Rhone blend but with that extra sunshine.

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### ABOUT THE GROWER

1996 heralded a new era for the Darling region of South Africa with the establishment of a new privately owned winery: Darling Cellars. With its unique terroir and the demarcation of the area as Wine of Origin Darling in 2003, the focus is on producing wines that are regionally and varietally true. Some 20 shareholders produce grapes from approximately 1300 hectares of vineyards.

The cool and temperate west coast offers a variety of micro- and meso-climates and different soil types, providing superb quality grapes that are then crafted into unique wines. Approximately 95% of the estate's vineyards are planted with unirrigated and untrellised bush vines. The advantages of bush vines are plentiful, but the most important attribute for Darling Cellars is that a bush vine is quite hardened against drought as the water resources in the area are very limited. The natural ability of a bush vine to regulate its yield is also critical in an area where one cannot irrigate. In a dry year, the bush vine will carry fewer bunches and in a wetter year it'll carry more bunches of grapes. This leads to great fruit concentration and a natural balance when the grapes are harvested.

A bush vine also has a deep penetrating root system. Thanks to the low clay content in the soils, their roots can get to water resources and nutrients that lie deep in the soil. Because of their untamed and untrained nature, the only way to harvest and prune a bush vine is by hand. This is a labour intensive process, but the advantages of hand picking, such as bunch selection and gentler handling of the grapes, all outweigh the extra effort and cost. Indeed, the amount of care taken over the bush vines brings the farmers into closer contact with their vines and gives them an unsurpassed understanding of all their blocks of vineyards. No wonder there is a bush vine on the Darling Cellars logo.

South Africa is a land of contrasts, and each of its winemaking areas is geographically distinct. The predominant factors are the proximity to the ocean, the prevalence of mountains or low lying hills, the soil types and composition, and the amount of rainfall. Before 2003, Darling was part of the Swartland wine of origin

area. The producers there felt that Darling offered something different from the greater Swartland area, primarily due to its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. The Swartland vineyards closest to the sea are another 6 kilometres inland from the Darling Cellars site.

The predominant soil types of Darling's low lying, north east and south west facing hills are decomposed granite and Oakleaf. The relatively low clay content makes for well drained soils and, although the water table is quite high in winter, the vineyards are never flooded. Pockets of sandy soil to the east of the region are great for white wine production, where the breezy, ocean-facing slopes deliver well ripened grapes with more acidity and herbaceousness. Combining grapes from both of these areas results in wines of exceptional character and natural balance.

The main focus at Darling Cellars is Sauvignon Blanc and Shiraz thanks to the cooling influence of the Atlantic Ocean. Other excellent performing varieties include Pinotage, Chenin Blanc, Cinsault, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Merlot, and Viognier. Chenin Blanc and Cinsault have been around since the start of wine growing in Darling, with some blocks dating back to the 1940s. Darling Cellars' premium Pinotage block was planted in 1974, and still produces top quality grapes, at a low yield of 3 tonnes per hectare.

Great improvements and plenty of modernisation has taken place at the winery since its foundation in 1948. Stainless steel tanks ranging in capacity from 5000 to 54,000 litres fill the cellar, giving the opportunity to create both small, individual cuvées and larger volume blends. A barrel ageing cellar with approximately 450 barrels is the pride and focal point of the winery.

In the cellar, grapes and wines are handled as little and as carefully as possible. Good grapes, good equipment and knowledgeable people who make wine with great passion and skill are some of the key elements involved in producing wine at Darling Cellars.

The local biodiversity is very important at Darling Cellars. With a total of 2987 hectares of natural land, Darling is preserving 2.3 hectares of veld for every hectare of vines it has planted. With more than 10% of the floral species in only 1% of the area of the Cape Floral Kingdom, Darling truly is unique among the world's grape growing regions.

Darling lies within the Cape West Coast Biosphere with a wonderfully diverse composition of soil, fauna and flora and terroir. Darling has three major soil types which leads to three distinctive vegetation types, namely Renosterveld, Strandveld and Sandveld. A fourth type, Graniteveld, is also common in the hills. Both Renosterveld fynbos and Sandveld are critically threatened due to the rapid expansion of human habitation and agriculture on the west coast. Darling Cellars currently employs six people dedicated to protecting and rehabilitating these natural areas, and their main objective is to remove invasive alien species of tree, such as Port Jackson, Rooikrans and Blue Gum. About 1200 flower species are found in the area, and 80 of them are endemic. Darling has quite a few breeding pairs of Blue Cranes and large flocks of this vulnerable species have been seen in the area. The occasional Secretary Bird can also be spotted walking around the wheat fields.

A few of the farms in the area have been converted into wildlife and nature reserves, bringing back the game from days gone by. Big game animals such as Zebra, Kwagga, Gemsbok, Bontebok and Eland have been reintroduced in these

reserves, with Steenbok and Duiker commonly seen in the vineyards and surrounding natural habitats. With all the important natural resources in the Darling area, sustainable farming has always been the way to survive and protect this most beautiful of regions.

All of these varying factors result in wines that are true to their terroir and true to the identity of Darling Cellars. Investment continues in the winery and cellar with some of the most modern and up to date winemaking equipment in the industry today. A modern bottling line, new presses, a barrel maturation cellar, a new grape off-loading system and continuing replanting of vineyards all contribute to the estates advances in contemporary winemaking.