



Wild Ferment *Syrah* 2018



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Syrah is the red wine varietal that rules the Northern Rhône Valley. There are a number of myths associated with the origin of Syrah, which all add a touch of romance to the grape and today it ranks as the 6th most planted varietal in the world. It is a versatile variety that adapts well to various regions and expresses a true sense of terroir.

The grapes for our Peacock Wild Ferment Syrah stem from the slopes of the Schapenberg, which forms part of the cooler 'Golden Triangle' of the Helderberg region on the coastal outskirts of Stellenbosch. Deep red soils provide moisture and nutrients, which give our Syrah its supple, spicy characters.

Our Peacock Wild Ferment range is named after the brightly plumed birds conspicuous in and around Waterkloof's vineyards and if you are lucky you might just spot the albino Peacock from which the label gets its inspiration.

A GENTLE HAND

We follow a 'less is more', minimal intervention winemaking philosophy for all our wines: Grapes are tasted at regular intervals to determine the optimal ripeness level. Harvesting takes place by hand, after which the whole bunches are also sorted by hand and then placed via gravity into our open top wooden fermenters. The juice is then fermented spontaneously with "wild yeasts", which allows for the true flavours and character of the vineyard to be expressed in the wine. Soft punch-downs by feet are applied to gently extract the tannins during fermentation. To ensure soft tannins, the wine is left on the skins for approximately 30 days. After this, the wine is drained via gravity and the skins are pressed with the basket press.

The Peacock Wild Ferment Syrah 2018 was aged in a combination of old 600L French oak barrels for 20 months, after which it only underwent a light filtration. A small dosage of sulphur (and only sulphur) was added before it was finally bottled. No other additions such as tartaric acid or enzymes were allowed.

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2017/2018 GROWING SEASON

The Cape experienced a very dry growing season from the end of the 2017 harvest and also during the beginning of 2018. The 2017 winter was not exceptionally cold but still colder than the previous 3 years, which helped to ensure an even budburst. The rainfall was the lowest that we have experienced in the last decade on the farm.

Budburst started earlier than usual due to milder winter temperatures. We could see some of the first buds appear early in September. From there on the vines were struggling a bit to grow due to the dry condition and veraison only took place in early January. The dam levels were also low and we were only able to irrigate the younger blocks. The best practice was to always have a complete weed-free vineyard to prevent excessive water usage and to limit stress on the vine by suckering if needed- sometimes this also happens naturally.

In early January and early February, we did get some rain. I believe that this was the saving grace for our vines to help them ripen the fruit more evenly. During this time, we did not see excessive heat spikes and had lovely cool evenings which provided a longer growing season for all the flavours develop over a longer period.

Harvest started about 10 days later than in 2017. We saw a decrease in berry size on some blocks. Fortunately, little to no rot was detected on the grapes, which helped to have a stress-free sorting table. Overall, we are more than happy with the quality of the 2018 harvest.

TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD

A balanced wine with beautiful red fruit on the nose, light floral notes and a hint of black and white pepper. The light, elegant flavours are perfectly balanced with fresh acidity and well-rounded tannins. Enjoy this wine on its own or with a simple lasagne dish.

THE NUMBERS

Alc: 13 %

TA: 5.74 g/l

pH: 3.45

RS: 1.7 g/l