20 16

HAMILTON RUSSELL VINEYARDS

Pinot noir

ESTATE WINE OF ORIGIN – HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY

SOIL: Low-vigour, stony, clay-rich, shale-derived soil
ALCOHOL: 13.87%
ACID: 5.80 g/l
PH: 3.53
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.8 g/l
BARREL MATURATION: 100%
BARREL AGEING: 10 Months
MALOLACTIC: 100%
1ST FILL: 39% 2ND FILL: 39% 3RD FILL: 22%
WOODING: 100% 228 liter French Oak Barrels
TIGHT GRAIN: 100%
FRENCH COOPERS: 65% Francois Freres, 35% Mercurey
TOASTING: 40% Medium, 43% Blonde, 17% Medium Long
YIELD: 2.87 tons/ha, 18.76 hl/ha
PRODUCTION: 3614 cases of 12 bottles equivalent

Release date – February 2017

Growing Season

2016 was another unusually early and short harvest - almost exactly the same timing as 2015. But as is wonderfully the case with nature, the character of the 2016’s is surprisingly different to the 2015’s. For the winelands in general, the story was of excessive heat and extreme dryness. But this was not the case for our appellation, the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. Close proximity to the cool South Atlantic kept the maximum temperatures in line and we also benefitted from timely rain from the southeast, which seldom reaches the warmer inland areas. January was quite a bit warmer than our long-term average (the same as for 1998 and 2011) but it was not drier than average. And the crucial month of February was wetter than average without being warmer - as was March. Our main dam was almost full at the end of harvest. A relatively warm December, followed by a hot January was probably the main factor in making 2016 an early year. High humidity did create some anxiety - less over downy mildew - more over oidium - so it will be remembered as a more challenging year than 2015, but the resulting wines for the classicists and purists will perhaps be seen as more typical of our style.

Wine Style

Our low-vigour, stony, clay-rich soil, cool maritime mesoclimate, naturally tiny yields of well under 35 hl/ha and our philosophy of expressing our terroir in our wines – give rise to a certain tightness, tannin line and elevated length to balance the richness and generosity of our Pinot noir. Our Pinot noir is not overly fruity, soft and “sweet” and it generally shows hints of that alluring savoury “ primal” character along with a dark, spicy, complex primary fruit perfume.