



DE TRAFFORD MERLOT 1996

VINEYARD BLOCKS

1 block 8 year old vines on 4 wire vertical trellis. Clone MO192 on 101-14 rootstock. Western low lying slope of Helderberg mountain. Soil poor gravelly clay mixture. No irrigation necessary in 1996. Yield
7 tons / hect.

2nd block 8 year old vines on 5 wire vertical trellis. Clone MO192 on R99 rootstock. 'Mont Fleur' vineyard - high altitude slope on eastern side of Helderberg mountain. Soil red Hutton type. No irrigation. Yield 6 tons / hect.

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

A fairly difficult vintage with above average rain during the growing period. The ripening stage was generally cool with some nail biting scattered rain. It required nerve to wait for full ripeness before picking. The fruit was picked in good healthy condition with nice ripe tannins.
Harvest date: 18/2/96 – 29/2/96.

PRODUCTION

100 % destemming by hand and gentle crushing directly into various stainless steel fermentation tanks. Most tanks received a light sulphur addition. Spontaneous natural yeast fermentation followed a 3 day cold soak period. Fermentation temp. rose to 30 degrees and cap punched down 3 times a day. Total time on skins approx. 14 days. Wine drained directly to barrels. Single pressing from small traditional basket press included.

All wine undergoes malolactic fermentation in the barrel. This helps integrate the new oak component and fix colour and flavour compounds. 30% new French oak and 5 % new American oak was used from the high quality 'Taransaud' and 'Demptos' cooperages. Time in barrel 17 months, which included several rackings to gradually clarify the wine and assist maturation development.

This wine was lightly fined with egg whites (2 eggs per barrel), before bottling unfiltered by hand on the property. Bottling date : 18 / 8 / 97.

TASTING NOTES

Plum colored. Attractive cherry, plum, blackberry nose with wafts of vanilla and other spices. Good body with fruit persisting and soft tannin core. Nice length. Probably
best

between 1998 and 2004. The rich / sweet fruit combines well with dryer (grills and roasts) red and white meat dishes.

ANALYSIS

Alc. 13.32 Sug. 1.7 TA 5.4 pH 3.57 VA 0.53 SO2 27 & 58