



RESERVE 1997

MONT FLEUR VINEYARD

This blended wine best reflects our magnificent vineyard site high up on the eastern slopes of the Helderberg mountain. Soil deep red Hutton type. The core of the 1997 is based on an exceptional batch of **Merlot (50%)** with **Cabernet Sauvignon (26%)** and **Cabernet Franc (24%)**.

Merlot – 9 yr old vines on 4 wire vertical trellis. Clone MO192 on R99 rootstock.

Cabernet Sauvignon – 4 yr old vines on 5 wire vertical trellis. Various virus free clones on 101-14 rootstock.

Cabernet Franc – 4 yr old vines on 5 wire vertical trellis. Clone CF1D on 101-14 rootstock.

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

A very difficult vintage with a lot of rain during the initial growing period. The ripening period, however, was ideal with record low temperatures and almost no rain. We had amazing quality grapes to work with and hopefully time will express the full potential of this vintage. Harvest date : 14 / 3 / 97 & 3 / 4 / 97

PRODUCTION

Handpicking into 20 kg lugboxes. 100% destemming and gentle crushing directly into open top fermenters. Spontaneous **natural yeast** fermentation @ max. temp. 34°C for the Merlot and 32°C for both Cabernets. Time on skins 10 days for Merlot and 14 days for Cabernets, with cap of skins punched down (pigeage) 1 – 4 times a day. Wine drained directly to barrels together with single pressing from traditional basket press.

All our red wine undergo malolactic fermentation in the barrel. This helps to integrate the new oak and fix colour and flavour compounds. Mostly **new French oak** used.

Time in barrel 20 months, which included several rackings to gradually clarify the wine and assist maturation.

The wine was lightly fined with fresh egg whites before bottling **unfiltered** by hand on the property.

Bottling date : 4 / 12 / 98.

Production : **295 magnums** only.

TASTING NOTES

Impressive deep red colour. Lush blackberry, plum aromas spiced with a little cinnamon. Dense tannins and well integrated oak. Complex with long, nicely dry finish. Probably best between 2001 and 2010. Ideal with rich, but finely flavoured red meat dishes.

ANALYSIS

Alc. 14.24 SG. 2.2 TA 5.8 pH 3.76 VA 0.71 SO2 25 & 40