

## **DE TRAFFORD MERLOT 2003**

### **VINEYARD BLOCKS**

1 block 15 year old vines on 7 wire vertical trellis with moveable foliage wires. Clone MO 192 on 101 - 14 rootstock. On low lying Helderberg mountain site. Poor gravelly clay soil.

Yield 5 tons / hect. (32hl/ha).

2nd block 9 year old vines on 7 wire vertical trellis with moveable foliage wires. Mix of "new clones" on R110 & R99 rootstocks. 'Mont Fleur' vineyard - high altitude mountain slope. Soil deep red Hutton. Yield 6 tons / hect. (39hl/ha).

3% Cabernet Franc and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon included.

### **VINTAGE CONDITIONS**

The growing and ripening period was near perfect. A light irrigation at veraison ensured the grapes got through the end of the warm, dry summer without too much stress. The wines have intense fruit, excellent structure and great maturation potential.

Harvest date : 8 / 2 / 03 – 12 / 3 / 03 @ 23.5 – 25° balling.

### **PRODUCTION**

Handpicking into 20 kg lugboxes. Destemming and gentle crushing directly into small 2 ton open top fermentation tanks. Spontaneous natural yeast fermentation @ max. 30 deg. with the cap of skins punched down manually 2-3 times a day for 10 days. Wine drained directly to barrels together with single pressing from traditional basket press.

All our red wines undergo malolactic fermentation in the barrel. 35% new French oak and 5% new American oak was used from high quality coopers. Time in barrel 21 months, which included several rackings to gradually clarify the wine and assist maturation.

The wine was bottled unfiltered by hand on the property.

Bottling date : 13/1/05. Production : 815 cases.

### **TASTING NOTES**

Deep red colour. Dark cherry and plum nose with spices and roasted oats complimenting. A big, intensely flavoured merlot with a rich, mouthfilling palate and a classic long, firm finish. Probably best between 2006 & 2013. Ideal with strong flavoured grilled red meat.

### **ANALYSIS**

Alc. 14.6 SG. 1.7 TA 5.9 pH 3.51 VA 0.54 SO<sub>2</sub> 25 & 65