



DE TRAFFORD MERLOT 1997

VINEYARD BLOCKS

- 1 block 9 year old vines on 4 wire vertical trellis. Clone MO192 on 101-14 rootstock. Western low lying slope of the Helderberg mountain. Soil poor gravelly clay. No irrigation necessary in 1997. Yield 6 tons / hect.
- 2nd block 9 year old vines on 4 wire vertical trellis. Clone MO192 on R99 rootstock. 'Mont Fleur' vineyard - high altitude slope on the eastern side of Helderberg mountain. Soil red Hutton type. No irrigation. Yield 1/2 ton / hect !

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 great vintage.

Harvest date: 3/3/97 – 14/3/97 @ 22.4 - 24° Balling.

PRODUCTION

100% destemming by hand over a wooden griddle and gentle crushing directly into stainless steel tanks. Spontaneous natural yeast fermentation followed a 2 day cold soak period. Fermentation temp. rose to 30 - 34 degrees and cap punched down 4 times a day initially, reducing to twice a day towards the end of fermentation. A few days post fermentation maceration allowed with floating lid on. Total skin contact time - 10 days.

All our red wines undergo malolactic fermentation in the barrel. This helps integrate the new oak component and help fix colour and flavour compounds. 35% new French oak and 5% new American oak was used from the high quality 'Taransaud' and 'Demptos' cooperages. Time in barrel 18 months, which included several rackings to gradually clarify the wine and assist maturation development.

This wine was lightly fined with egg whites (2-3 eggs per barrel), before bottling unfiltered by hand on the property.

Bottling date : 18 / 9 / 98

TASTING NOTES

Deep red colour. Intense blackberry, cherry nose surrounded by exotic spices. Intense fruit on palate reigned in by firm, but fine tannins. Long, nicely dry finish. Probably best between 2001 and 2007. Excellent with rich, red meat dishes especially roasts and casseroles.

ANALYSIS

Alc. 13.81 Sg. 1.9 TA 5.7 pH 3.65 VA 0.66 SO2 18 & 28