

## THE PLACEMAT COLLECTION 2010

The Western Cape is blessed with probably the most beautiful wine region in the world as well as some of the most amazing sites to produce great wines of individual character. We have the oldest soils of any major wine growing area in the world, which together with a complex topography and the effects of the oceans to the south and west, means a huge variety of suitable viticultural sites. Places of individual character.

Although there are a number of excellent wines being produced in South Africa, we are a long way off really communicating the beauty of specific vineyard sites on a large enough scale to be clearly legible to the average wine lover. The European notion that we don't have "terroir" in South Africa is ridiculous. Any serious winemaker knows there can be huge differences between some vineyard blocks and others. Unfortunately, there are so many other variables (such as use of new oak, blending etc.) that obscure the potential communication of site to the consumer. This Placemat Collection is a modest attempt to showcase a few interesting places where Syrah is successfully grown by eliminating most of the variables and producing each of the five wines in exactly the same way.

### LOCATION OF THE FIVE PLACES

1. [Benguela Cove](#)
2. [Springfontein](#)
3. [Mullineux](#)
4. [Sijnn](#)
5. De Trafford



### 2010 VINTAGE

A hot, dry year. Sugars suddenly took us all by surprise and climbed quickly when getting close to optimum ripeness. I asked each grower to try and get the grapes to us at a potential alc. of around 14.5%, but most came in a degree or so over that. Despite the logistical difficulties, we managed to get all 5 wines within 1% alc. of each other, so that fair comparisons can be made. (There was a sixth wine which fell off the charts at 17% alc. and was banished to Plan B!)

### THE PLACEMATS

Each vineyard is showcased with a photo that best conveys the character and beauty of each site. On the reverse side is a tasting mat with a little background to each vineyard as well as a photo and a bit of background info to the growers behind each place.

### WINEMAKING

We received all grapes (400kg from each vineyard) in good condition and de-stemmed and crushed directly into old 400L barrels with the heads removed. No yeast or anything else added, except about 20ppm SO<sub>2</sub>. The time it took for fermentation to start varied quite a bit, but all started within 2 days. The cap of skins was punched down 2 to 3 times a day and after 12 to 13 days the wine was drained and pressed to old 225L barrels. Some of the lots fermented quicker than others, but due to the small containers all got up to a max. temp of 30°C and subsided to around 21°C by the time they were drained. No malolactic culture was added and they all completed malolactic fermentation in their barrels within 2 to 3 months. The SO<sub>2</sub> was increased and the wines matured for 19 months with two rackings prior to bottling by hand directly from the barrels, unfinned and unfiltered. Diam corks used to avoid any bottle variation.

We hope that the beauty of individuality of site is clearly perceptible to novices and professionals alike.