

# RUSTENBERG WINES

## STELLENBOSCH MERLOT 2020

### INTRODUCTION

Merlot has been a mainstay red grape variety on Rustenberg since the late 1970's where its lead role has been to complement Cabernet Sauvignon in blends. Rustenberg's Merlots tend to be bigger and bolder in body and are structured to have excellent aging potential, pairing well with red meat based dishes and rewarding decanting before being served.

### VINTAGE

The 2020 vintage will be remembered as a good vintage produced under the spectre of the COVID-19 pandemic impacting the globe. Fortunately the harvest was not impacted on Rustenberg by the government-sanctioned lockdowns, allowing all fruit to be picked and processed when ripe. A good winter in 2019 saw a return to average rainfall for the year. Two unusual weather events in the growing season, a large rainstorm and a heat wave, impacted some varieties flowering and berry set, however, in the context of the entire vintage these had a minor impact. Crop levels were up by 15% from the 2019 vintage, which saw a return to yields being average to slightly above average for most varieties. Quality wise, the white wines have superb acids and more moderate alcohols with wonderful fruit concentration, while the reds tend to be more medium-bodied with moderate alcohols, good freshness and supple tannins, potentially to be enjoyed earlier.

### VINEYARDS

<b>Wine of Origin</b>	Stellenbosch
<b>Varietal Blended</b>	100% Merlot
<b>Soil Types</b>	Decomposed Granite, Hutton and Tukulu
<b>Trellising/Pruning System</b>	VSP (Vertical Shoot Positioned), 2 Node Spur Pruned
<b>Irrigation Type</b>	Minimal Drip Irrigation
<b>Picking Method &amp; Date</b>	Hand Picked, March 2020

### WINEMAKING

<b>Extraction Method</b>	Crushed and De-stemmed Fruit, Pumped Over During Ferment
<b>Fermentation Vessel</b>	Stainless Steel
<b>Yeast</b>	Cultured Active Dry Wine Yeast
<b>Extended Maceration</b>	7 days
<b>Oak Aging</b>	11 Months
<b>Age and Type of Oak</b>	20% new and 80% 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th fill French 225L barrels
<b>Fining Agents Used</b>	Egg Whites (Albumen)
<b>Final Analysis</b>	Alc v/v: 14% TA 5.7g/L pH 3.48 RS 2.6g/L
<b>Bottling Date</b>	December 2021

### WINE

<b>Tasting Note</b>	Rich aromas of blackberries, cassis, eucalyptus and dark chocolate follow through to a smooth palate that is both balanced and well-rounded with fine grained tannins. This wine can be enjoyed now or will benefit from maturation in ideal cellar conditions.
<b>Aging Potential</b>	8 – 10+ years from vintage under ideal cellaring conditions.

### ACCOLADES

AWARD	COMPETITION/PUBLICATION	YEAR/EDITION
Silver Medal – 93 Points	The Trophy Wine Show	2022

