



PHILOSOPHIE 2014
Special release, maiden vintage

Philosophie, is a brave endeavour in which we attempt to marry the mind, the heart and the soil as we celebrate the diversity of Vondeling.

Each year a rare Paardeberg flower is selected and illustrated by an artist of our choice to create a unique label. In this, our maiden vintage, we've selected *Haemanthus sanguineus* to be our flag bearer. Appropriately, this delicate bloom was the first to emerge after the devastating veld fire of 2011 and for whom we cry, *Per Ignem Vitae... from fire, life!*

The Vineyards:

In a handful of specific vineyards, we explore the absolute limits of quality with no consideration to cost. In this vintage, a small vineyard of ultra-low-yielding Cabernet Sauvignon, takes centre stage and is handsomely supported by fellow Bordeaux companions, Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

Each vineyard is carefully assessed at the end of the growing season and attentively pruned during the winter months. At bud burst, any shoots which develop poorly are immediately removed. This ensures that the remaining shoots have plenty of energy to grow sturdy, fertile flowers and facilitate uniform berry set. As the grapes develop only one bunch per cane is selected and the rest are dropped to the ground. This lowers the load on the vine, thereby removing any stress in the plant and allowing perfect flavour and tannin development. It also removes the need for irrigation and preserves the grape's natural acidity.

Vinification:

Once deemed to have reached optimal ripeness the grapes are hand-picked and refrigerated for 24hrs. The bunches are carefully destemmed and the berries individually sorted and screened to remove any green material. The intact berries are then ferried, via conveyor belt, to open top fermenters for cold soaking. Cold soaking is done at 6 degrees Celsius for a period of 5 days. Cold soaking is a process which promotes partial degradation of the grape cell wall, to allow the gentle extraction of the fruit flavours and aromatics located just below the surface of the skin. Subtle tannin extraction protects these delicate flavours and promotes colour stability.

As the berries slowly come to room temperature, ambient yeast populations commence a spontaneous fermentation. This natural fermentation, by multiple wild yeast strains, is preferable, as it will ensure that the wine has complexity and character.



A cool fermentation temperature slows the rate of fermentation and affords the winemaker adequate time to assess and manipulate the character of the wine, thus unlocking its full potential.

The method of extraction is by regular manual punch down and the wine is basket pressed after two weeks of maceration on the skins. From the press the wine moves directly to new 300L French Oak barrels for malo-lactic fermentation. This slow bacterial degradation of the wine's harsher acidity has the welcome side effect of meshing the oak and natural fruit flavours together in a seamless package. The wine remains on its yeast and malo-lactic lees for 14 months before the best 10 barrels are selected, blended and returned for an additional 8 months of maturation. Of these 10 barrels only 5 are selected for the final blend. The wine is bottled after 4 months in tank and further matured for one year before it is released.

Tasting Note:

Freshly trimmed cigar, blueberry crumble, dark chocolate and a hint of liquorice.

Rich, svelte and sensuous, the smooth, textured tannins are bold but rounded. There is both dark and red berry fruit with an underlying black olive savouriness and a hint of lavender. The acidity adds verve and balance, while lending length and poise.

Analysis

Alc % : 14.5

pH : 3.78

TA : 6.1g/l

RS : 2.8g/l

Awards & accolades:

Platter SA Wine Guide – 4.5 Stars