



ZORGVLIEET

Merlot 2020

Tasting notes: The Merlot on Zorgvliet grows in shallow duplex soils that contains a dense layer of clay in the subsoil. This leads to concentration and causes this wine to often be mistaken for its heavier brother - Cabernet Sauvignon. The nose reminds of black cherry, plum and sandalwood, with a hint of boegoe. The entry in the mouth is smooth with good dark chocolate focus on the mid palate and a somewhat dryish finish. There is a tight midpalate focus. The wine is full bodied and rich and will reward some aging.

Analysis: alc: 14.8% / ph: 3.5/ TA: 5.7g/L / RS: 2.4g/L / VA: 0.59g/L

Blend information: Merlot: 96%; Cabernemet franc 4%

Viticulture: The vineyards are in the Banghoek Valley, Stellenbosch. Elevation is 300-350m above sea level and is mostly southerly facing. This provides for moderate temperatures resulting in the late but slow ripening of the fruit. The soils are made up of leached, decomposed granite and sandstone. Gravel in the upper layers provides for good drainage in wet seasons and clay in the subsoil provides for moisture retention in dry ones. Vineyards are trained on a 7 wire hedge and cane pruned by hand. Average yield is 5-8tons/ha.

Harvest notes: The 2020 season started fairly cool. At the end of October, wind, a cold snap and then a heat wave caused uneven set in some reds. A heat wave in November 2019, coupled with much needed rainfall, set the vines on a growth spurt that at times seemed tricky to manage. A coldish December-January was followed by typical Cape February heat waves that carried on until mid March. Minimal rain fell during the harvest months.

2020 was a challenging harvest in the cellar due to simultaneous ripening of cultivars. Late ripening white vineyards and early reds overlapped more than in most other years and we had our hands full trying to get everything picked at optimal ripeness. Berries were small and some red varieties ripened somewhat unevenly. The crop was down by 5-10% depending on cultivar. White wines are fresh with good natural acidities. Red skins released color and tannin easily and required careful extraction to prevent harshness. Overall a challenging but good and very promising vintage.

Winemaking notes: Grapes were harvested by hand and berry sorted into stainless steel fermenters. Fermentation commenced spontaneously and was finished with a pure strain. Extraction was done with a combination of punch-down, rack-and-return and pump-over methods. Batches were gently pressed and immediately racked to small French oak barrels where they completed malolactic fermentation. The components were racked three times to enhance clarification and development. Blending took place after 14 months aging, after which the composed blend was aged in barrel for another 4 months. The wine was bottled after a total of 22 months.

Barrel composition: 13% new - 225L French oak; rest 2nd fill

Aging potential: This wine should improve with aging over a period of 5 years or longer, if it is stored under optimum conditions

Production: 6998 x 750ml

