

MAISONS MARQUES & DOMAINES



MEERLUST



Meerlust Estate

Rubicon

Stellenbosch, South Africa

Vintage: 2016

Overview

Meerlust Estate has been part of the Myburgh family tradition for eight generations, dating back to 1693. Long recognized for producing world-class wines, the Meerlust Estate is singularly rich in charm and history. Meerlust produces wines that are true to the intrinsic character of their vineyards located in the Stellenbosch region in South Africa. The diverse soils, the unique coastal climate and over 300 years of dedication are all essential components of Meerlust's complex, rich and truly distinctive wines.

Winemaking

The cabernet sauvignon is grown on low-yielding, predominantly biotite partially decomposed granite gravel topsoil rich in quartz and feldspar to a depth of approximately 600mm with a loamy clay subsoil. The merlot vineyards are planted on more clay-rich, yet well-drained soils to ensure moisture retention and availability to the vines roots right through the summer. There are considerable deposits of iron-rich Laterite in the merlot vineyards which accentuates the fruit definition and mineral profile of the wine. The cabernet franc vineyard is situated on very well-drained, stony vilafontes soil with approximately 20% clay which is ideal for this variety. The petit verdot is on oakleaf 3 soils on a northerly aspect to ensure full phenolic ripeness.

The vintage was generally later with some uneven ripeness showing in the later cabernets. A decision was made to practice very gentle extraction to ensure the wines were not overly tannic or astringent. The merlots were the star of the vintage and so extended maceration on our best merlot tanks yielding succulent, opulent wines. The varieties were fermented separately with a combination of remontage and delistage. The wines were transferred to barrel early for malolactic fermentation in 55% new Nevers oak, 25% second fill barrels and the remaining 20% in older French oak barrels. The final blend is indicative of the vintage: 49% cabernet sauvignon, the lowest in Rubicon history, with 28% merlot, exhibiting this varieties great expression in the unusual 2016 vintage, 20% cabernet franc and 3% petit verdot. The wine was barrel aged for 16 months before bottling.

Tasting Notes

The 2016 Rubicon shows great charm and drinkability even at this early stage, no doubt a result of the high merlot and cabernet franc composition. We were very cautious with regards to tannic structure as some of the later cabernets exhibited astringency which we wanted to minimize in the final blend. Wonderful exotic aromas of plum, sandalwood and perfume, still with a touch of creamy vanilla. The palate is medium bodied with a forward dark fruit flavor of cassis and mulberry followed by a lithe tannic structure fleshed out with juicy fruit. The impression is one of liveness and grace rather than overarching power.

Harvest Notes

The 2016 growing season was unusually cool but quite dry, presenting unique problems of fruit set and ripening. Irrigation was used strategically even on the mature vineyards to ensure slow ripening and proper flavor and tannin development. The merlot and the cabernets were extensively suckered from early in the season, and during veraison vendage vert was applied extensively to ensure an evenly ripe crop.

Food Pairing

This wine pairs well with venison, game, pot roast and noble cheese. Suggested serving temperature is 64°F - 68°F.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals: 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot

Wine Alcohol: 13.9%

Titrateable Acidity: 5.9 g/L

pH: 3.52

Residual Sugar: 2.56 g/L

Aging: 16 months in barrel

Aging Potential: 15-20 years