

2021 Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge Pinot Noir

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 100% Pinot Noir made from French clones PN777 & PN115.

WINE OF ORIGIN: Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge, Western Cape, South Africa.

TOTAL VINEYARD PRODUCTION: 1.6 tons selected from 2 small parcels of Pinot Noir.

HISTORY: During the year, I have the opportunity to visit a number of areas outside of Elgin. Occasionally, I come across something so fascinating it deserves a closer look. In 2018, I discovered two small parcels of Pinot Noir grapes grown on Bokkeveld Shale in a protected lee of the Hemel-en-Aarde valley - an area renowned for Pinot Noir. It made sense to grasp the opportunity with both hands and the GPS Series is testament to these special places and celebrates them.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 21st - 27th February 2021
Brix at Harvest: 23.00 - 23.10

SEASON: 2021 was an outstanding vintage that was cooler and later than the ten-year average. During the post-harvest period of 2020, there were reasonable water reserves in the soil and this allowed the vines to have a successful build-up of reserves as we headed into winter. Fortunately, winter rainfall was significantly higher than the previous season. Budding occurred in late August around normal and once activated, it was very even for Pinot Noir. A cool early Spring with wetter conditions meant the soils remained cool, leading to a delayed growth of the immature shoots by up to three weeks. Veraison occurred 2-3 weeks later than average giving a much longer hang-time than normal and harvesting began in late February but went deep into March. The wines themselves have a fabulous pH with high acidity and perfumed flavour profiles; alcohols are somewhat lower than average, in fact, the lowest since I began making wine. Tannin ripeness was fabulous and very even as the phenolic ripeness took place over such a long time and at lower sugar levels.

WINEMAKING: The grapes were handpicked into small lug baskets and manually sorted on a conveyor before the stems were removed. The destemmed berries fell onto a vibrating table in order to remove jacks and substandard berries before dropping uncrushed into small 500kg open-topped fermenters. The grapes underwent a 3-day maceration before spontaneous fermentation began. A gentle delestage program was charted, whereby all the juice ran from the tank daily, to allow any unwanted lees to settle out and for the cap to completely collapse before running the juice back over the crumbled pomace. The grapes remained on skins for 14-15 days before being run off their skins to tank with the remaining marc gently basket pressed. The wine settled overnight before being racked by gravity into barrel. Malolactic proceeded in barrel followed by a light sulphuring after which the finished wine spent around 10-11 months undergoing maturation. During this period each and every barrel was tasted every 6 weeks and notes and scores logged to better understand our knowledge of clonal, soil and barrel selection. No finings were used, and the wine was simply racked and lightly filtered prior to bottling.

BARREL SELECTION: A small number of artisanal coopers were selected, all from Burgundy and only French oak was chosen. Importantly, each clone and soil type was micro-vinified as two separate batches. Each batch used an algorithm that we developed to ascertain which coopers work best and how many new and used barrels were utilised. Overall, the average in 2021 was 50% new oak; 76.1% 228 l and 23.9% 500 l.

ALCOHOL: 12.5%

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 1217 bottles were produced.

TASTING PROFILE: Prominent mid crimson; lifted appealing notes of Rainer cherry, coffee grounds, dried stone fruits and shortbread. A focused entry delineated with precise lively acidity that runs alongside a rich texture that expands into the mid-palate giving a purpose and energy to the wine. Flavours of white pepper, red cherry, crème Fraiche and oatmeal biscuits add fruit core as the back palate glide to an extended finish assuaged by silky tannins.



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