

2019 Groenland Bokkeveld Shale SH9c

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 100% Syrah made from clone 9c.

WINE OF ORIGIN: Groenland Mountain, Elgin, Western Cape, South Africa.

SOIL: Bokkeveld Shale.

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 550 bottles.



OVERVIEW: The inspiration for these Deconstructed Syrah's stems from my belief that the Elgin region boasts credentials that make it world-class. My mandate has been to prove that Elgin has a signature grape synonymous with the area and exhibits specific 'terroirs' (mesoclimates) within its demarcated boundary, reflecting regional distinctions. I split Elgin into seven different sub-regions or zones whereby each zone identifies with a particular topographical or climatic nuance. Within these zones, I then selected specific vineyards and further an individual clone. This wine is from the northern part of Elgin, on the foot slopes, at 400m, of the Groenland Mountains. The soils of Bokkeveld Shale lie over clay and contain a high iron content with ample nutrients enabling the wines to have more structure and density along with better concentration.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 20th March 2019.

Brix at Harvest: 22.8

SEASON: In 2019, cold units that allow much-needed respite for the vines to sleep were the best for five years. Spring rainfall was less than usual, which eased disease pressure. Still, gusty, localised conditions damaged some of the young shoots and flowers but were sporadic, leaving us with lower yields on some parcels. It became unusually warm toward the end of October. It cooled down dramatically in November. Later in December, regular rain showers and cooler conditions were more positive. From January through to the end of March, the summer was generally cooler than average. The cooler weather helped the vines accumulate flavour more gradually, and cooler nights helped retain acidity. This led to a delayed harvest for Syrah and some lower alcohols in bottle. The resulting wines achieved good colour and good phenological ripeness, with elegant structure and both optimal sugar and acidity levels.

WINEMAKING: The grapes were handpicked and then manually sorted on a conveyor before the stems were removed. The destemmed berries fell onto a vibrating table to be sorted again before dropping uncrushed into a small 500kg conical hopper and being forklifted into open-topped fermenters. The grapes underwent a 3-day maceration before spontaneous fermentation began. A gentle pigeage program was charted and the grapes remained on skins for 29 days. The wine was then racked to barrel under gravity and the remaining pomace basket-pressed. Malolactic then proceeded in barrel followed by a light sulphuring and 17-month maturation. No finings were necessary and the wine was simply racked and bottled unfiltered.

BARREL SELECTION: Artisanal coopers were selected from Burgundy and the Rhone, with only French oak chosen. Importantly, this wine was micro-vinified as a separate batch. In 2019 50% is new oak and was matured in two 228 litre barrels.

Alcohol: 14%

TASTING PROFILE: An evocative nose of black pepper, lavender, blackberry and currant, roasted meat and gentle spices. A medium-bodied wine that envelops the mouth with an array of flavours: bitter chocolate moving to chocolate cream, chalk dust, and black velvet cake. The tannins are fine and build into an expectably more powerful wine than initially suggests. There is a savoury plushness to the structure too, wonderful length and intriguing almost quirky complexity that makes one reach for another sip.

