



Ernie Els Big Easy Red Blend 2016

main variety Shiraz

vintage 2016

analysis alc: 14.05 | ph: 3.61 | rs: 3.7 | ta: 5.9

type Red

producer Ernie Els Wines

style Dry

winemaker Louis Strydom

wine of origin Western Cape

body Light

tasting notes

The sublime and lively 2016 vintage shines through in perhaps the best Big Easy yet. A melange of ripe Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon is layered with waves of Grenache, Cinsaut, Mourvèdre and a touch of Viognier. Quite perfumed and fittingly complex, the palate is lined with chocolate, spice and confectionary cherries. A peppery nuance adds further character, all framed by a fine structure and juicy core.

ageing potential

Ready to drink, its long chalky finish will assist its 5 years ageing potential.

blend information

60% Shiraz, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Grenache, 3% Mourvèdre, 7% Cinsaut, 5% Viognier

in the vineyard

The 2016 Vintage

Challenging conditions led to a reduced wine grape crop for South African producers in 2016, but grapes were healthy and concentrated flavours promise good wines. The weather was very warm, especially from the end of October towards the end of January, which restricted the growth and constituted lower bunch masses and smaller berries. However, the dry conditions led to the vineyards and grapes being very healthy overall. Smaller berries led to more concentrated colour and flavour on the positive side and good wines are expected from the 2016 harvest. Good reserves were accumulated during the post-harvest period (April and May), after which leaf fall occurred mostly at the right time. The winter started off late in most of the regions but the weather conditions were cold enough to break dormancy. Spring came on time and the weather conditions were ideal which led to good, even bud burst. The harvest period started a week early due to the warmer weather and it ended about two weeks earlier. The wines from the 2016 vintage appear astoundingly good, with great structure and good flavours.

About the vineyard

The Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvèdre and Viognier were sourced from the Helderberg region within the Stellenbosch appellation. Cinsaut was obtained from various sites in Stellenbosch as well. Grenache was purchased from both Wellington and Stellenbosch vineyards.

about the harvest

The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning.
Dates: March & April 2016. 25.5° Brix average sugar at harvest

in the cellar

On the sorting table, all excess stalks and inferior berries were carefully removed. Grape bunches were gently destaked. Fermentation took place in 7-ton, open-top stainless steel tanks. The wines were pumped-over and/or punched-down manually 3 to 5 times per day ensuring maximum colour extraction from the skins. After primary fermentation the wines were left on skins for an additional 10 - 16 days before pressing. Each variety is matured separately (micro-ovinified) in oak barrels before blending and eventual bottling.

Cooperage: Aged for 14 months – 80% in 300 litre French Oak barrels and 20% in 300 litre American Oak barrels.

Production: 22 000 x 6 x 750ml cases.