



Ernie Els Big Easy Cabernet Sauvignon 2018



RELEASE DATE	1 st June 2019
VARIETAL COMPOSITION	Cabernet Sauvignon 85% • Cinsault 15%
APPELLATION	Western Cape
VINEYARDS	Stellenbosch, Paarl and Robertson
HARVEST	March 2018. 24.5° Brix average sugar at harvest
COOPERAGE	Second and third fill French oak barrels
TECHNICAL DATA	Alc. 14.21 % By Vol. • R.S. 3.6 2g/l • T.A. 6.2 g/l • pH 3.62
PRODUCTION	23 300 x 6 x 750ml cases

Louis Strydom has gone back to the traditional style made on the foothills of the Helderberg mountain, where Cabernet Sauvignon and Cinsault were planted together from around the 1920's, and the two varieties were later blended together to make a wine that is softer and rounder in style for early enjoyment. By the mid 1970's this style was so popular, that Cinsault was one of the most widely planted varieties in Stellenbosch. Over the years Cinsault has all but disappeared in Stellenbosch, but now almost 50 years later, we have replanted Cinsault on Ernie Els Wines to revive the traditional 'Helderberg red blend' style. This Big Easy Cabernet Sauvignon has up to 15% Cinsault blended in to be true to the history of the Helderberg red blend, as well as provide an extension of our vision to be the best Cabernet Sauvignon producer in South Africa.

TASTING NOTES

This 2018 has a fresh, crunchy and vibrantly fruited palate that balances the charming sweeter notes with aplomb. Opulent and deeply aromatic on the nose, there is just a hint of spice that co-mingles beautifully with the raspberry and red currant charm on the palate. Immediately inviting with ripe plum, red cherry and hints of cassis, the palate is vital, lively and already approachable. Light to Medium bodied in structure it is drinking well now, but is sure to mature and smooth out over the next year or so.

THE 2018 VINTAGE

The 2018 harvest season will be remembered as the drought season. At Ernie Els Wines we are very blessed to have bountiful water on the Helderberg. We were however still careful with our water use during the summer months leading up to harvest. We've also been working hard to adapt our viticultural techniques during the past 3 years to help the vineyards cope optimally with the heat and limited irrigation. The drought was further buffered by a surprisingly, and fancifully cooler season.

Due to the somewhat buffered circumstances the vines reacted gracefully to the drought with no abnormal growth patterns observed. Vine canopies were kept nice and thin for sunlight and of course less leaves means less water needed. Vineyards are resilient plants and its natural instinct in drier years are to produce smaller bunches with smaller berries. Small berries are usually the start of a great wine and 2018 was no different. The white wines from the 2018 vintage appear to have a great vintage specific concentration and elegance.

ABOUT THE VINEYARD

Cabernet Sauvignon was sourced from the Helderberg region within the Stellenbosch appellation. Selected pockets of Cabernet Sauvignon were sourced from different coastal regions to compliment the style. The Cinsault was sourced from 24 year old dryland bush vines in the Paardeberg region.

WINEMAKING

The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning. On the sorting table, all excess stalks and inferior berries were carefully removed. Grape bunches were gently destalked. 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 was left on skins for an additional 10 - 16 days before pressing. Each variety is matured separately (micro-vinified) in oak barrels before blending and eventual bottling.