



Big Easy by Ernie Els 2017 Red Blend



RELEASE DATE	November 2018
VARIETAL COMPOSITION	Shiraz 60%, Cabernet Sauvignon 20%, Grenache 5%, Mourvèdre 5%, Cinsault 5%, Viognier 5%
APPELLATION	Western Cape
VINEYARDS	Selected vineyard sites in Stellenbosch, Paarl and Robertson
HARVEST	March & April 2017. 24.5° Brix average sugar at harvest
TECHNICAL DATA	Alc. 14.56% By Vol. • R.S. 2.8g/l • T.A. 5.8g/l • pH 3.65
COOPERAGE	Aged for 14 months in older oak barrels – 80% in 300 litre French Oak barrels & 20% in 300 litre American Oak barrels
PRODUCTION	35500 x 6 x 750ml cases

TASTING NOTES

The 2017 Big Easy is arguably the most serious and riveting vintage yet. The dry vintage was conducive to producing a superbly concentrated, beguiling wine that dazzles the senses. It is a shade darker with a black core, offering a brooding nose that takes time to unfold. Complexity is revealed with elegantly ripe black berry, liquorice, fine Chinese spice and smoked herbs. A majority of Shiraz cloaks the palate with fruit-laden tannins, covered in melted milk chocolate and *morello* cherries. 20% Cabernet sauvignon adds a backbone of minerality and definition, while equal parts of Cinsaut, Mourvedre, Grenache and Viognier add a Mediterranean feel. It shows solid grip and power in its youth, suggesting up to a decade of maturation.

THE 2017 VINTAGE

The previous growing season had its challenges, which seemed to roll over into the 2016/2017 growing season with the continuation of the drought. Winter 2016 was quite dry with even less rain than the previous year. Spring was an illusion as we basically went straight into warmer summer days. Bud burst was good due to sufficient soil moisture, but with the warmer spring/summer weather the soil started losing moisture quickly which naturally reduced shoot growth. The vineyard then naturally focuses its energy on developing and ripening the small bunches. Smaller berries led to more concentrated colour and flavour. The dry conditions also led to the vineyards and grapes being very healthy overall. With moderate, but warm days during December and January we saw the start of harvest return to its normal date. The uninterrupted warmth during harvest also helped the bunches reach optimal ripeness while the berries steadily developed its flavours over a slightly longer period of time. The white wines from the 2017 vintage appear astoundingly good, with great structure and good flavours.

ABOUT THE VINEYARD

The Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Viognier were sourced from selected vineyard parcels on the Helderberg mountain within the Stellenbosch appellation. The typical Hutton Clovelly soils found on the Helderberg, contains a high gravel content which offers rich middle palate weight giving this wine exceptional depth and fruit purity. The Cinsault grapes were sourced from a specific vineyard site planted with 26-year-old dryland bush vines in the Perdeberg region.

WINEMAKING

The grapes are hand-picked in the cool of early morning. Whole berries are fermented in open top tanks and barrels with intermittent pump-overs and punch downs to ensure a balance between flavor, colour and tannin extraction from the skins. All ferments are meticulously monitored during fermentation to ensure that all the natural aromas and flavours are preserved and highlighted as required. After primary fermentation some tanks and barrel will undergo extended maceration as required. Each variety is matured separately (micro-vinified) in oak barrels before blending and eventual bottling.