



Ernie Els Big Easy Cabernet Sauvignon 2017



RELEASE DATE	1 st February 2018
VARIETAL COMPOSITION	Cabernet Sauvignon 85% • Cinsault 15%
APPELLATION	Western Cape
VINEYARDS	Stellenbosch, Paarl and Robertson
HARVEST	March 2017. 24° Brix average sugar at harvest
COOPERAGE	Second and third fill French oak barrels
TECHNICAL DATA	Alc. 14.44 % By Vol. • R.S. 3.6 g/l • T.A. 5.6 g/l • pH 3.76
PRODUCTION	15 500 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. Most importantly, for the consumer and wine lover, this wine will provide a delicious and accessible Cabernet Sauvignon

TASTING NOTES

The Big Easy Cabernet Sauvignon is medium bodied with a crimson core and purple edge. Red fruits on the nose suggest a more elegant guise, leading to a serious palate with gritty tannins. Notes of wet earth and tobacco blend with creamy oak, sweet spice and milk chocolate. Plush, ripe plums and *Morello* cherries line the palate through to a soft, almost tropical, finish. The rich 2017 tannins will integrate over the next few years as the wine gathers more complexity.

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

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.