

# Ernie Els

WINES · STELLENBOSCH



## MAJOR SERIES MERLOT 2017

*All the hallmarks of a classic Merlot with ripe plums and earthy notes supported by a core of minerality and fleshed out with ripe strawberry, forest underfloor and a hint of chocolate.*

### 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.

### VITICULTURE

The Merlot vineyards grow on the warm, north-facing slopes of the Helderberg region within the Stellenbosch appellation. With an altitude of approximately 250 metres above sea level, together with the cooling influence of the Atlantic Ocean, the ripening period can be extended, resulting in wines with phenolic ripeness.

### VINICULTURE

The hand-picked bunches arrive at the winery in the morning. The bunches are sorted, destemmed, after which the berries are sorted again to ensure that only the ripe berries go to the tank. Whole berries are fermented in open top tanks as well as in barrels. Intermittent pump-overs and punch downs ensure a balance between flavour, 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 batches will be left on the skins for extended maceration as required. The batches are pressed and transferred to a combination of old and new oak for maturation. Each batch of Merlot is matured separately (micro-vinified) in oak barrels before blending and eventual bottling.

### TASTING NOTES

All the hallmarks of a classic Merlot with ripe plums and earthy notes supported by a core of minerality and fleshed out with ripe strawberry, forest underfloor, hint of chocolate, and a deepening of dark black berry laced with a hint caramel and oak spice. The savoury palate is coated in sweet attractive oak with distinct salty edge. Medium bodied, fresh yet serious with good line of acidity and clean to end.

### AWARDS

Platter's – 4 Stars

### TECHNICAL DATA

Merlot 94.1%; Cabernet Franc 5.9%

Alc 14.76% by Vol. – R.S. 3.0 g/l – T.A. 5.9 g/l – pH 3.38

Aged for 14 months in French Oak barrels

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION		CASE QTY	CURRENT VINTAGE	ALCOHOL %	
Ernie Els Major Series Merlot		6 bottles	2017	14,5	
BOTTLE	BOTTLE SIZE	UPC BOTTLE BARCODE	BOTTLE DIMENSIONS (Height x Diameter   Weight)		
	750 ml	6009880029099	330 mm (h) x 77.9 mm (d)   725 g		
CASE	CASE DIMENSIONS (Height x Length x Width)	SCC CASE BARCODE	CASE WEIGHT	NUMBER OF 6 x 750ml CASES PER LAYER	NUMBER OF LAYERS PER PALLET
	337 mm x 163 mm x 245 mm	6009880029105	9.4 Kg	28	4