



DE TRAFFORD MERLOT 1995

VINEYARD BLOCKS

1 block 7 year old vines on 4 wire vertical trellis. Western low lying slope of Helderberg mountain. Soil poor gravelly clay mixture. Given a little relieving irrigation around 'veraison'. Yield 5 tons / hect. 2nd block 7 year old vines on 5 wire vertical trellis. 'Mont Fleur' vineyard - high altitude slope on eastern side of Helderberg mountain. Soil red Hutton type. No irrigation.
Yield 7 tons / hect.

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

Long, dry, hot, trouble free summer produced very ripe grapes of excellent quality from low yielding vines. Grapes were picked by hand in the cooler mornings between
6 / 2 / 95 - 22 / 2 / 95 @ 23.5 - 25.3 degrees balling.

PRODUCTION

100 % destemming by hand and gentle crushing directly into various stainless steel fermentation tanks. Most tanks received a light sulphur addition and tartaric increased by max. 15 %. No yeast added. Cold soak allowed for approx. 3 days. Fermentation temp. rose to 32 degrees and cap punched down 3 times a day. Total time on skins approx. 14 days. Wine drained directly to barrels. Single pressing from small traditional basket press added.

All wine undergoes malolactic fermentation in the barrel. This helps integrate the new oak component and fix colour and flavour compounds. The wine is racked on completion of malo. and sulphur increased to approx. 35ppm. 30 % new French oak was used - Never oak from Taransaud cooperage and Troncais and Allier from Demptos. Time in barrel 18 months. Aim is to allow maximum development in the barrel to accentuate 'terroir' rather than oak extraction.

Racking was done by gravity or with hand bellows barrel to barrel approx. every 6 months. This wine achieved a natural balance and clarity that required no fining or filtration before bottling by hand on the property.
Bottling date : 13 / 9 / 96.

TASTING NOTES

The wine has an attractive deep plummy colour. The spicy oak complements the black-cherry and cassis fruit beautifully on the nose. The palate is full bodied and concentrated, with ripe silky tannins. Best between 1999 and 2004.

ANALYSIS

Alc. 13.83 Sug. 1.8 TA 5.5 pH 3.4 VA 0.55 SO2 24 & 57