

# HILL & DALE

## MERLOT 2017

*Winemaker:* Guy Webber assisted by Fred Fisser

*Appellation:* Stellenbosch

*Viticulturist:* Nico Nortje

*Grape varietal:* Merlot

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### **Background**

The Hill&Dale label offers a range of accessibly-styled wines with a New World character for international appeal, created by award-winning winemaker, Guy Webber.

Grapes for the Hill&Dale wines are selected from vineyards within the Stellenbosch region. Extensive vineyard management programmes are in place for each of the vineyards from which the fruit is selected. All aspects of the process are strictly governed so as to comply with the standards set for the Integrated Production of Wine (IPW) system.

### **Vineyards**

The vineyards, planted between 1987 and 1993, are situated on gentle slopes facing north-east. They grow from 160m to 230m above sea level in marginal soils of decomposed granite and Table Mountain sandstone. The vines are all grafted onto nematode-resistant rootstocks and trellised on five-wire fence systems.

With rainfall figures well below the average and overall temperatures well above the average, the 2017 vintage can best be described as having been warm and very dry.

Yields reached a mere 7,62 tonnes per hectare for the vintage.

### **Winemaking**

The grapes were harvested by hand between 13 February to 14 March 2017 and at an average sugar content of 23,36° Balling. After destalking and crushing, most of the free-run juice was bled off the skins in order to produce Rosé. The remaining juice was left on the skins and, due to the dramatically-increased juice : skin ratio, the fermentation temperatures were kept relatively low in order not to over extract the tannins from the skins.

Pressing took place after merely 48 hours (once sufficient colour had been extracted) and the ferment completed under cool conditions (around 20°C) in stainless steel tanks.

After the completion of the ferments, the different batches were transferred to a combination of French, American and Eastern-European oak barrels where they matured for an average of eleven months before being racked, blended and readied for bottling.

The wine was bottled on 18 July 2018 with the total production being 16 000 cases (6 x 750ml).

### **Winemaker's Comments**

*Colour:* Intense, vibrant ruby.

*Bouquet:* Fresh red raspberries and currants upfront with tweaks of hazelnut and herbaceous Italian parsley leaf.

*Taste:* Medium to full-bodied, the wine displays a generous warmth with flavours of dark, ripe cherry, sweet plum and stewed raspberry. The clean and elegant aftertaste is friendly, dry and very well balanced.

*Ageing potential:* Extremely friendly in its youth the wine should gain in complexity to an age of three to five years.

### **Food pairing**

Some favourites for pairing with this wine are pork and peanut wantons with soy sauce drizzles, pulled mutton bolognaise, braaied lamb chops and juicy Boerewors with surfeit coriander.

### **Chemical analysis**

*Alcohol:* 14.14 %vol

*Residual sugar:* 2.4 g/l

*Total acidity:* 5.7 g/l

*pH:* 3,59

*Total extract:* 32.3 g/l

*Volatile acidity:* 0,57 g/l

*Total SO<sub>2</sub>:* 96 ppm (at release)

