

Lighthouse Merlot 2017



DH Collectors Reserve

BACKGROUND

Inspired by Cape Town's radiant energy and creative demeanour, our new premium offering – The Collector's Reserve – is a unique range specially crafted by our winemakers using only the finest grapes from Cape Town's best vineyards. To truly connect the Winelands and City, we have handpicked prominent landmarks in Cape Town and commissioned a vibrant Capetonian artist – Theo Vorster – to impart his vision of these landmarks onto each bottle. This range has been designed as a collector's item for both wine and art lovers alike.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

The cheery red and white candy-striped lighthouse in Green Point with its foghorn, affectionately known as "Moaning Minnie", is well-known for guiding ships along the misty Cape coast. These misty, cool climate conditions develop the Merlot's unique character, displaying notes of mint and red cherry.

THE VINEYARDS

Block selection was made based on vineyard history linked to wine style and quality, with the specific desired characteristics of the wine in mind. The backbone came from an 18-year-old North-facing vineyard on the open Westerly side of the valley. The canopy stays naturally small which is a key feature in great Merlot as it avoids the unwanted green flavours associated with vigorous canopies. Green harvesting was done to ensure even ripeness. Merlot under dry conditions can easily go into water stress resulting in unbalanced wine, so the selected vineyards have red Hutton soil with fairly high clay content, ensuring good water retention.

The block is fairly big so we made use of a program

“Fruitlook”, using multispectral satellite imagery supplying us weekly with a normalised difference vegetation index. We used these images to identify differences in the vineyard canopy and assess the quality to find the best spots.

The rest of the grapes came from a South-facing vineyard block on the Westerly side of the valley in close proximity to Table Bay. Based on history, this vineyard delivers strong mulberry flavours and ripens evenly on fairly deep red Hutton soil with good water retention. The canopy was split with half growing upwards and half facing downwards to ensure a bigger leaf surface producing fruity flavours. The small proportion (13%) of grapes from this block played a big part in completing the picture.

THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were hand-picked in 500kg fruit bins and handled with minimum intervention. De-stemming took place over a sorting table into 1 ton and 15 ton fermenters. The must was left overnight and drained of 10 – 15% of its juice to concentrate body, flavour and aroma compounds on the final product. The fermentation was started with a preferred yeast strain. Continuous timer-regulated pump-over cycles, in combination with compressed air and regular manual punch downs on the smaller bins, were used to extract maximum fruit, tannin and colour. The wine was matured in a combination of new and second fill extra tight grained French oak barrels for 14 months.

WINEMAKER

Martin Moore and Wilhelm Coetzee

COLOR

Dark ruby red.

NOSE

Dark chocolate and rich sweet fruits including red cherries

with hints of vanilla, cinnamon and sweet tobacco.

TASTE

A full-bodied wine that boasts sweet ripe fruit and velvety tannins with cedar wood that lingers on after taste.

FOOD PAIRING

Traditional lamb with rosemary, thyme
& garlic, mushroom dishes, cured meats, Camembert, Boerenkaas,
Parmesan,
Roquefort.

Chemical analysis