

RADFORD DALE

WINE & VINTAGE **FREEDOM Pinot Noir 2009**

APPELLATION Elgin

ANALYSIS alcohol 13.4 %
total acidity 5.7g/l
pH 3.5
residual sugar 2.2g/l

PRODUCTION **294** cases (12 x 750ml)

VINEYARDS & HARVEST

Flowering was again excellent in the Spring and resulted in a crop-set which was even and subsequently extremely healthy. Crop thinning was thus carried-out in order to limit yields, to 5 - 5.5 Tons / hectare (or 32 - 35 hectolitres / hectare). Selected from 3 single vineyards in Elgin, in the mountains beyond Stellenbosch and above the Ocean, planted at the turn of the millennium in 2000. all Dijon Clones : 777 & 115. The 2009 harvest was characterised by a cooler than normal ripening season (helped notably by the stronger than normal variation in day and nighttime temperatures), resulting in enhanced freshness through excellent natural acidity, restrained alcohol levels and elegant berry flavours.

Elgin is one of the naturally coolest vineyard locations in South Africa. It's altitude (500m – 700m above sea level is considerably higher than the 3-400m of Stellenbosch) benefits the location through naturally lower temperatures and higher rainfall. There is greater cloud cover (due to the way clouds form as the air rises over the mountains from the coast and condenses into rainfall). What's more, in winter, Elgin benefits from much cooler temperatures than Stellenbosch and consequently the vines enter into a deeper dormancy state, which results in better rest which, in-turn, also enhances longevity of the vine and supports general vine health. To cut a long story short, thanks to these unique natural attributes, Elgin is emerging as a wonderful, naturally favourable location for producing among the finest aromatic Pinot Noir and white wines in the Country.

VINIFICATION

Following a pre-selection process in the vineyard, the grapes are picked by hand at sunrise into 15kg lug-boxes. They are then ferried to our winery on the Helderberg Mountain in Stellenbosch. The half an hour journey carried-out early in the morning before the sun has time to raise temperatures. Following the *triage* process, by hand on our sorting table, the grapes were de-stemmed then pre-fermentation cold-soaked in open-top 600L French oak barrels. Cap-punching was carried-out by hand twice a day. The emphasis is specifically not on over-extraction, but rather on finesse and depth. As the fermentation (100% wild yeast) draws to a close, but while some residual sugar remains, the free run juice is transferred to 228 Burgundian barrels (1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th fill), where fermentation was completed. The pomace and skins were then pressed by hand in a small basket press and the juice kept separate. The maturation of the wine, on the lees, lasted for almost 10 months before we assembled the barrels and bottled without filtration.

THE NAME

Having grown-up in Burgundy -where the over-regulation of the AOC system and the Zombifying bureaucracy of the EU act as a maddening straight-jacket to any creativity or innovation- Alex Dale cut loose upon arriving in South Africa in 1994, weeks after Nelson Mandela became the 1st democratically-elected President. Free from EU regulation dictating such aspects as methods of planting & trellising, levels of yields, residual sugar, acidity, alcohol etc. decreeing even which bottle shape is legal or illegal, and even the fundamental right to plant vines at all, Alex experienced for the very first time the total freedom to act as his heart and mind felt would allow the greatest quality, in this magnificent and untampered-with vinescape. Freedom to challenge ourselves against nature rather than regulation and Freedom to be wrong or right, rather than, absurdly, a regulatory outlaw ! In the spirit of an electrifyingly exciting, newly democratic South Africa, this burst of liberty sewed the seed for the creation of Radford Dale's passionately crafted **Freedom** Pinot Noir. And as luck would have it, Nelson Mandela had just completed his long walk to freedom and become President that year too...

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

Pinot Noir should be all about finesse, elegance, balance and complexity. We love the minerality that pervades throughout the palate of this wine, lifting -from sip to swallowing- the cherry aromatics, the silky texture and the integrated barrel aromas. The freshness, length and the purity of its varietal characteristics make this wine one of the most enjoyable Pinot Noirs we have yet encountered in the Cape. Freedom is inspiration...



The Radford Dale Philosophy brings together the natural qualities of the geology & climate of the Cape of Good Hope with the experience & passion of a team of friends, from the Old World & the New. Together they make some of the finest, rarest & most individual wines of this incredible region.