

RADFORD DALE

WINE	GRAVITY
VARIETIES	Shiraz 55%, Merlot 25% & Cabernet-Sauvignon 20%
VINTAGE	2008
APPELLATION	Stellenbosch –Helderberg & Devon Valley
ANALYSIS	alcohol 14.5% total acidity 5.4g/l pH 3.7 residual sugar 1.4 g/l
PRODUCTION	685 cases (12 x 750ml)



Barossa born Ben Radford and Burgundian raised Alex Dale form a wonderfully unique partnership. Modern winemaking and traditional values combine to create one of the finest and rarest gems of the Cape of Good Hope

VINEYARDS & HARVEST

2008 was a vintage which we really enjoyed. Following some extremely hot conditions in 2007, the weather was far more consistent and temperate in 2008 in our area, with excellent Spring rains and the Summer, with its customary long hot days, was characterised by its cooler than usual nights. Picking of the whites started in early February as usual but the reds lasted into April, with the last of the Cabernet, as the more moderate conditions led to an extended ripening season. Just how we like it.

Each parcel of these vines is situated on ocean-facing, mountainous slopes of the premium Stellenbosch Appellation, predominantly on the Helderberg. These relatively cooler maritime areas of Stellenbosch benefit thus from the cooling influence of the ocean, the sanitizing breezes and the relative altitude. Yields were kept low, at around 28 -35 Hl / Ha, all grapes are hand-picked and rigorously hand-selected over a sorting table. Not a single grape finds its way into this wine unintentionally.

VINIFICATION

Following the *triage* process, by hand, each batch of grapes is entirely de-stemmed then pre-fermentation cold-soaked for 5 days, all individually. Pump-over was made once a day, as for cap-punching. The emphasis is specifically not on over-extraction, but rather on finesse and depth. Left on skins for +/-10 days after fermentation before racking off. One component sees the free-run juice going directly to barrel (small Allier Oak, new & 1st fill, using only artisan French coopers), again each batch separately, entirely by gravity. The pomace and skins are left over-night to drip-drain – this time into new and 2nd fill “Demi-Muids” (600L French Oak vats. We have been importing these into South Africa, having seen how beautifully they work in some of the great Syrahs of the Northern Rhone). These are not mechanical pressings but natural, **gravitational** pressings, which give rise to far more integrated and supple tannins in the final wine (and to the name of this wine). Whatsmore, this juice is denser and richer than free-run, without the astringency of mechanical pressings. A Twilight zone, in miniscule proportions. A natural asset, coaxed out of obscurity. Micro-oxygenation is carried-out in barrel and Demi-Muids to further develop polished tannins, deeper colour and greater fruit intensity. Malolactic fermentation occurs in barrel and Demi-Muids for optimum integration. The individual components are separately matured, on their primary lees for about 9 months. The barrel wines are then racked-out, assembled for the first time in tank, then returned to barrel, harmonised, to complete maturation over a further 5 or 6-month period. The Demi-Muids gravitational portion remains unracked and completely untouched until it is drawn from the Demi-Muids after 15 months, assembled with the barrel portion, settled for a month then bottled, without fining or filtration. This is a truly unique method in South Africa, it has produced a wine of stunning depth, complexity and intensity, yet with finesse and genuine class. By definition, production will always be highly limited (we do not bottle Gravity every vintage) and can only come from the very finest Stellenbosch grapes we produce.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

In an era where over-blown, in-your-face wines too often take precedence over individually crafted and complex wines, our standard bearer dares to be singular. We have strived for equilibrium, between natural sweetness of fruit and integration of structure. Each varietal contributes its unique facets; the Shiraz its persevering spiciness and its gutsy, supple body, the Cabernet its blueberry backbone and dense, ripe tannins, the Merlot its deep red-berry fruit and suave mouth-feel. All knitted together by patient, careful maturation. This wine bears the hallmark of the region it was reared in and the mineral soils in which it has its roots. Entirely selfishly, it is made with our own palates in mind. Even idealists sometimes have to keep the best for themselves...