

RADFORD DALE

VARIETAL	Vine Dried Viognier	
VINTAGE	2008	
APPELLATION	Stellenbosch (Heldeberg), South Africa	
ANALYSIS	alcohol	10.5% by volume
	total acidity	6.7 g/l
	pH	3.95
	residual sugar	290 g/l
PRODUCTION	780 (375ml) bottles	

VINEYARDS & HARVEST

This is a single-vineyard Viognier from the property where we are located on the Helderberg Mountain in Stellenbosch, overlooking the Ocean in a South / South-Westerly direction. The vineyard was planted in 1999 and is without a doubt one of the finest blocks on this property. The sub-soils are of decomposed granite, with a stony surface and an ideal orientation. Vine-dried means that we do not need or use either botrytis or straw drying techniques to produce this naturally, concentrated sweet wine. Instead, we simply pinch with pliers the stems above the bunches, damaging them and then let the grapes dehydrate on the vine -as no further nutritional exchange occurs between the bunches and the vine. As the bunches dehydrate, they concentrate and the ratio of natural sugar to water within the berries tips further in favour of sweetness. Yields are consequently crazily low, typically at 6-10 hl / ha. The 2008 vintage was a textbook ideal season for this wine, with a cold winter, excellent rainfalls, even flowering in the Spring and a Summer characterized by hot days and cool nights, resulting in an extended ripening season. This gave rise to a lovely balance in the natural composition of the grapes, allowing for better complexity and subtlety in the flavours and structure of the wine. Add to this the two to three weeks extra hanging & dehydration time after the regular Viognier was picked and we had turned the most stunning grapes into an awesome sweet concentrate, still hanging on the vines. The bunches were then very carefully cut into small lugbins, placed in our cool room overnight and then pressed while cool the next day.

VINIFICATION

The treacle-like juice was funneled directly into barrel where we allowed the ambient natural yeasts to take-over and to convert some of the sugar into alcohol. This spluttered along at its own pace for about 11-months in the barrel, after which point we simply hand bottled the wine, by siphon, without fining or filtration. You will find therefore a gentle haze in the wine and a light deposit in the bottle -and you can be sure it is there on purpose. This is a totally natural wine.

BARRELS

All 2 ½ barrels-worth of this wine were fermented and matured in French oak : Allier & Vosges. Two 228 L barrels and one 114 L 'Feuillette' half-barrel, all from artisanal Burgundian coopers.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

Distinctly Viognier on the nose, with striking apricot, honey, white petals and peaches, the palate is at the same time weighty in flavour while surprisingly mineral and fresh in length, with a lively beam of acidity carrying the entire recital an extra stanza. The texture is lush and sticky, coating your entire mouth with the essence of pure Viognier. There is fabulous aromatic diversity, backed-up with bags of flavour and moreish indulgence ! The appeal of this wine is completely hedonistic and recommended in complete excess.



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