

BIG EASY RED BLEND, ERNIE ELS

Vintage

2017**TECHNICAL ANALYSIS**

Alcohol	Residual sugar
14.6	2.8
pH	Acidity
3.65	5.8

A blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsaut and Viognier from in and around the Stellenbosch region.

TASTING NOTE

The 2017 Big Easy is arguably the most serious vintage yet. It is a shade darker with a black core, offering a brooding nose that takes time to unfold. Complexity is revealed with elegantly ripe black berry, liquorice, fine Chinese spice and smoked herbs. A majority of Shiraz (60%) cloaks the palate with fruit-laden tannins, covered in melted milk chocolate and morello cherries. 20% Cabernet Sauvignon adds a backbone of minerality and definition, while equal parts of Cinsaut, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Viognier (5% each) add a Mediterranean feel.

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

The previous growing season had its challenges, which seemed to roll over into the 2016/2017 growing season with the continuation of the drought. Winter 2016 was quite dry with even less rain than the previous year, while spring quickly passed straight into warmer summer days. Bud burst was good due to sufficient soil moisture, but with the warmer spring/summer weather the soil started losing moisture quickly, resulting in naturally reduced shoot growth. The vineyard then focused its energy on developing and ripening the small bunches, with smaller berries leading to more concentrated colour and flavour. The dry conditions also meant that both the vineyards and grapes were very healthy. With moderate, but warm days during December and January the start of harvest returned to its normal date. The uninterrupted warmth during harvest also helped the bunches reach optimal ripeness while the berries steadily developed flavours over a slightly longer period of time.

VINIFICATION DETAILS

The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning. Whole berries were fermented in open top tanks and barrels with intermittent pump-overs and punch-downs to ensure a balance between flavour, colour and tannin extraction from the skins. All ferments were meticulously monitored during fermentation to ensure that the natural aromas and flavours were preserved and highlighted as required. After primary fermentation some tanks and barrel underwent extended maceration as required. Each variety was matured separately (micro-vinified) in oak barrels (80% in 300 litre French oak barrels and 20% in 300 litre American oak barrels) for 14 months before blending and eventual bottling.

AWARDS

IWC & DWWA: Silver

ATTRIBUTES

 Origin	 Variety	 Malolactic Fermentation	 Bottle Size	 Vegetarian
South Africa	Red Blend	Yes	75cl	Yes
 Winemaker	 Finning Agent	 Closure	 Region	 Vegan
Louis Strydom	Egg white	Screw top	Western Cape	No