



ALTO

STELLENBOSCH

RED. BORN AND BRED.



ALTO M.P.H.S.

2015

Winemaker: Bertho v. d. Westhuizen

Appellation: Stellenbosch

Grape varietals: Cabernet Franc (50%) and Cabernet Sauvignon (50%)

Winemaker's comments

Colour: Deep, rich purple.

Bouquet: Dark fruit Cabernet Sauvignon with elegant red fruit Cabernet Franc notes dominate the nose. Well integrated wood spice.

Taste: Powerful elegance for a great vintage. Well balanced fruit, structure and acidity.

Food pairing: Excellent enjoyed on its own or served with dishes such as sautéed pork chops served with fennel or a wild-mushroom ragù served with pappardelle pasta and parmigiano cheese.

Chemical analysis

Alcohol: 14,8% by vol

Residual sugar: 3,4 g/l

Total acidity: 5,8 g/l

pH: 3,55

Extract: 35,0 g/l

Background

Alto, situated on the slopes of the Helderberg Mountain in the Stellenbosch district, dates back to 1693 when it was part of a much larger farm called Groenrivier (Green River), granted to a free burgher by Governor Simon van der Stel. In 1919 the owner of the farm, Hennie Malan, sold off half the land to his brother-in-law and set about planting vines on his remaining portion, focusing exclusively on red varieties. He named the farm Alto, a reference to its altitude (some slopes rise as high as 500m above sea level) and his striving for excellence. The cellar was built in 1920.

Alto has 93 hectares under vines. The trellised vineyards cling to the high granite slopes, ideal for the cultivation of red wine varieties. Harvesting at Alto traditionally only starts at the end of February / beginning March due to the cooling influence of the southerly breezes during this time. This ensures gradual ripening of the grapes and contributes to the development of delicate flavour in the fruit.

Just eight barrels (2400 litres) have been made of the maiden 2011 vintage of the 50/50 blend of Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon.

The name M.P.H.S. reflects the initials of the four winemakers who have built the reputation of the farm. They are Manie Malan, whose father planted only red cultivars on Alto as early as the 1920s; Piet du Toit, who acquired the farm in 1959; his son, Hempies, the renowned Springbok rugby player, who took over in 1983; and Schalk himself, who joined Alto in 2000.

Vineyards

Cabernet Franc – The vines were 19 years old at the time of harvesting, west-facing and situated some 400m above sea level. Grown in deep Hutton soil, the vines are located on slopes cooled by afternoon sea breezes. Drip irrigation was used only when deemed necessary. The yield achieved was 8 tons per hectare.

Cabernet Sauvignon – The vines were 22 years old at the time of harvesting, north to north-west facing and situated some 500m above sea level. Grown in rocky, decomposed granite soil, they are located on slopes cooled by afternoon sea breezes. Drip irrigation was used only when deemed necessary. The vines yielded an average of 4 tons per hectare.

Winemaking

Cabernet Franc – The grapes were hand-harvested at 24° to 25° Balling in the early morning of March 2012. Fermentation took place in stainless steel tanks at 25° to 27°C. The pump-over method was used to ensure maximum extraction of colour. The wine was separated from the skins after 10 days and was racked twice in stainless steel tanks. After malolactic fermentation it was transferred to new 300-litre medium-toasted, fine grain French oak barrels for 24 months.

Cabernet Sauvignon – The grapes were hand-harvested at 24° to 25° Balling in late March 2012. Fermentation took place in stainless steel tanks at 25° to 27°C. The pump-over method was used to ensure maximum extraction of colour. The wine was separated from the skins after 10 days after which the wine was racked twice in stainless steel tanks. After malolactic fermentation it was transferred into 300-litre new medium toast French oak barrels for 24 months.

The wine was blended without fining and received a light filtering before it was bottled on mid 2014. Total quantity produced: 2,900 bottles.