



ERIKA OBERMEYER WINES

Erika O Cabernet Sauvignon 2018, Wine of Origin Stellenbosch

Vineyards: Fruit from a 20-year-old and 9 year old vineyard planted on deep granitic soils in Firgrove, Stellenbosch.

The Firgrove vineyards lies between Somerset West and Stellenbosch at the foot of the Helderberg about 6 km from the False Bay rim. The unique soils originated around 500-550 million years ago when South America (in fact the Falkland Islands, then still attached) and Western Australia came crashing into the Cape. This particular collision deposited and broke off large amounts of granite forming what we now call Firgrove – a ridge sweeping up from the False Bay rim. The result, 500 million years later, is granite gravel soils. Underlying these low, water holding, nutrient poor top soils is a layer of laterite which we commonly call “Coffeestone”. This Coffeestone is made from mineral elements of the decomposed granite; once more fusing together to make what is essentially a very coarse, porous layer in the soil with good water and nutrient qualities. Below this we have partially decomposed granite in the form of saprolite. This subsoil, into which the vines push their roots, is the “Tough Times Bank” where the vines can access water and nutrients in slow release through the latter part of the season. As the soil dries out, the clay cracks and allows the vines to plumb deeper to keep going. The close proximity to the cold Atlantic Ocean, with a view of False Bay from Hangklip to Simonstown, ensures slow ripening. Sustained winds control the vigour resulting in an overall terroir effect of small bunches, small berries with concentrated berry flavours and full structured but ripe tannins.

Vintage 2018: The 2018 harvest season was really challenging, due to a prolonged drought which some believe to be the worst in 100 years. After the driest three-year period (2015-2017) in recent history; water resources in the Western Cape were at an all-time low, putting water supplies under immense pressure and leading to strict water rationing.

The winelands once again experienced an exceptionally dry and warm post – harvest period. The vines kept their leaves for longer than usual in the post-harvest period, which was beneficial for the accumulation of reserves for the coming season. Winter arrived late but was cold enough to break dormancy. Day temperatures were notably warmer and night temperatures colder than usual due to the dry conditions. Much lower rainfall was recorded, less than half the long-term average rainfall.

Bud burst started later due to cooler weather extending into August and September. Uneven flowering and berry set was common due to windy conditions and cold periods.

After slow shoot growth initially, vines picked up the pace as temperatures rose toward the end of November.

Although December and January were hot, with temperatures reaching 35 °C, none of the usual heatwaves were present. The rest of the growing season and harvest were notably cooler than normal.

The dry warm weather resulted in healthy grapes and small berries with good intensity. Noteworthy is the small berry size for this vintage; on average berries were twenty-five percent smaller by variety and largely under a gram per berry, adding to concentration. Greater variation between night and day temperatures during the ripening stage gave the colour and flavour formation a further boost, which are indicative of remarkable quality wines.

Harvested by hand early morning of 6 March 2018.

The 2018 harvest produced wines of excellent quality despite the challenging weather conditions experience and produced wines with concentrated fruit, complexity and good ageing potential.

Fermentation & Maturation: Hand harvested. Fermented in open top barrels with 3 – 4 punch downs per day. Matured in 1st (85 %) and second fill (15 %) 300 li French oak barrels for 25 months.

Tasting note: A serious wine with all the hallmarks of an extraordinary Cabernet. The nose features alluring nuances of concentrated red and black fruit, tilled earth and cedar wood combined with oak spice, while the palate shows intensity and depth underscored by chalky ripe tannins and a savoury finish. Rich and full bodied, yet expertly balanced with superb purity and focus.

Analysis:

Alc: 14.67 %	RS: 3.1 g/li	TA: 6.1 g/l	pH: 3.51	VA: 0.69
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