

Spice Route

Spice Route, Chakalaka 2013

PRODUCER

Charles Back was a pioneer in the Swartland when he started Spice Route in 1998. "Without [Charles]...the Swartland would still be regarded as a rural backwater" wrote Tim Atkin. Today, the region is the source of many of South Africa's outstanding wines, yet Spice Route remains one of the best and most credible producers in the region, due largely to the fact that they own their own vineyards. Spice Route's 100 hectares of vineyards are situated in Malmesbury and Darling. The former, all bush trained on Malmesbury shale and red clay subsoils (the clay ensures the vineyards are dry grown), give the Grenache and Mourvèdre the intensity of fruit that makes this region so exciting. Winemaker Charl du Plessis has been with Charles for 15 years, and knows the region intricately. The winemaking is 'hands off', as Charl is keen to capture the flavours and structure of the outstanding fruit he has grown.

VINEYARDS

Chakalaka is Spice Route's signature wine. It is a blend of six different grape varieties. The vineyards are planted on Richter 99 rootstock and are mainly bushvine planted on deep iron-rich clay soils, farmed without irrigation. The varieties Mourvèdre, Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, Petite Sirah and Tannat were selected for their suitability to the Swartland growing conditions, blended to express place before grape. The name is derived from a spicy South African relish which is similarly a fusion of different flavours.

VINTAGE

Prolonged winter conditions continued up until September, followed by a cool spring, which delayed bud burst. The vineyards had good growth in ideal dry weather conditions during the flowering and berry set period. There were ideal weather conditions during the harvest season with moderate day temperatures, cool night temperatures and no prolonged rain or heat waves. This had a positive impact on the grape quality and aided in establishing good colour and flavour. The harvest season was particularly late and about two weeks shorter than usual.

VINIFICATION

The fruit was hand-harvested and the grapes were destalked and lightly crushed. All fruit was fermented in open concrete fermenters. Manual punch downs were carried out during fermentation. The wines were racked and put in barrel for malolactic fermentation and further ageing. The components matured in seasoned French and American oak for 12 months before blending and further maturation of the final wine in the same old oak barrels.

TASTING NOTES

Chakalaka is deep ruby red in colour. There are aromas of clove and subtle white pepper followed by plum with elegant hints of spice. On the palate it is medium bodied with red fruit and integrated oak. The excellent balance of acidity and ripe tannins, will allow this wine to age well.

PRESS AND AWARDS

AWARDS

WINNER - The Wine Merchant Top 100 2016



VINTAGE INFORMATION

Vintage	2013
Region	Swartland, Coastal Region
Grape Varieties	50% Syrah/Shiraz 15% Mourvedre 13% Petite Sirah 8% Carignano/Carignan 8% Grenache/Garnacha 6% Tannat
Winemaker	Charl du Plessis
Features	Sustainable, Vegan, Vegetarian
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	14.5%
Residual Sugar	3.2g/L
Acidity	5.6g/L
Wine pH	3.58
Bottle Sizes	75cl

