

# EXCELSIOR



## Excelsior, Merlot 2015

### PRODUCER

The 19th century De Wet farm is located in the picturesque Robertson Valley, nestled between two rugged mountain ranges near the Breede River, where it benefits from ideal conditions to breed horses and grow vines. Historically, the farm had three activities: horse and ostrich breeding and vine growing, but today winemaking is the main activity. Owning 220 hectare of their own vines and having a bottling line on site has allowed the winery to control the making of its wines from start to finish. The De Wet family has also developed a social program which benefits its employees and the local community and, through the sales of Excelsior wines, has financed the building of a local crèche as well as the two teachers for the village school.

### VINEYARDS

For years the Excelsior land was grazed by thoroughbred horses because of the 'limestone' rich soils which contribute to bone strength. These soils have also been found to be highly beneficial to grape growing as the grapes from these vineyards display greater spice notes in reds and minerality in whites, than what is typically found in the Robertson region. Merlot is one of the more difficult grapes to grow successfully as the variety often displays green flavours and tannins. To minimise this they follow very strict canopy management practices where they sucker (water shoot removal) twice, leaf pluck where necessary, and most importantly bunch thin. This ensures an adequately "open" canopy, so that most berries get sunlight exposure. This brings out the blackcurrant and red fruit characters of Merlot and avoids green tannins.

### VINTAGE

2015 was a very good vintage as it was one of the driest summers that we have had in a long time. The grapes are therefore exceptionally healthy and concentrated, and the Cabernet Sauvignon is displaying intense varietal flavours.

### VINIFICATION

Grapes were harvested by hand for greater quality control. The bunches were immediately destemmed but not crushed. Fermentation took place in stainless steel tanks for a period of seven days at a temperature of between 28 and 32°C. Aerated racking was done twice daily to ensure a clean ferment and soft tannins. The grapes were gently pressed in a bladder press, after which malolactic fermentation was completed in tank. 45% of the total wine was aged in a mixture of French and American oak for a period of six months, whilst the remaining wine was aged in stainless steel tanks.

### TASTING NOTES

The nose shows lovely ripe cherry characters, backed up by smoky coffee and spice notes. The palate is soft, yet has a good structure for medium term ageing.



### VINTAGE INFORMATION

<b>Vintage</b>	2015
<b>Region</b>	Robertson, Breede River Valley
<b>Grape Varieties</b>	100% Merlot
<b>Winemaker</b>	Johan Stemmet
<b>Closure</b>	Stelvin
<b>ABV</b>	14.5%
<b>Residual Sugar</b>	2.1g/L
<b>Acidity</b>	5.7g/L
<b>Wine pH</b>	3.53
<b>Bottle Sizes</b>	75cl