



MULDERBOSCH
VINEYARDS

MIKE DOBROVIC'S HARVEST REPORT 2008



"The pants are the coolest pants in Stellenbosch. Wine made with pants like those is simply incredible."

A very cold, long winter 2007 meant that bud break was delayed 10 - 14 days. Bud break was even and perhaps better than last year. Early spring 2007 was cool, with above average rainfall. Early summer 2008 brought some rains, but almost no downy mildew. Harvest began later than usual this year, as later bud break and a cool spring led to late ripening.

Soil temperatures were a lot cooler for the first three quarters of harvest, due to all the rain we had and better cover crop growth. This helped retain quality we might have lost when temperatures spiked, as the micro climate was a bit cooler. Overall, the 2008 crop size was down about 5% on previous years.

The Sauvignon Blanc was harvested before the rain came. Sauvignon was down in tonnage on all our blocks this year, but that made for good acid levels at harvest in spite of a hot late January and February. Good acid and a beautiful balance of tropical fruit helped to bring about a wonderfully complex wine. It will be one to watch for!

The Chardonnay displays lovely citrus and peach fruits, with a touch of apricot in the latest picked tank. There's good structure and fullness in the natural ferment barrels. This wine is already a real stunner!

Chenin Blanc proved a particular challenge, as rot hit some of the Chenin blocks after heavy rains. But some of the lots were real beauties, and flavors range from crisp apple on some to ripe melon and apricot fruit on others. The block that went to barrel was fully ripe with very little rot, and we are quite happy with the wine in the end.

A heat wave over Easter caused the sugar levels of the reds to rise, resulting in dense, powerful wines. The phenolic ripeness on some Cab blocks was stunning, and the crop yielded dark, full wines with rich black currant fruit and big but soft tannins. The quality of the Shiraz crop was also quite good, although those grapes – which come from Stanford – tend to be above average every year. This particular vineyard gives more peppery rather than jammy notes, and the Shiraz can handle 100% new French oak with ease. While the Merlot blocks gave us some challenges initially, we finally got what we were looking for in terms of ripeness after the hot Easter weekend.

Despite a few 2008 harvest challenges, we ended up with some gems in the cellar!