MERLOT | 2016

Background

The Neethlingshof estate in Stellenbosch takes its name from its 19th century owner, Marthinus Laurentius Neethling, who served as mayor of Stellenbosch and was also a member of the Cape Parliament.

A member of the Biodiversity & Wine Initiative, acknowledged for its protection of indigenous habitat, the 378 ha winery has set aside 127 ha for conservation. It cultivates both red and white varietals, with the bias marginally in favour of whites. The major red varietals are Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Malbec and Pinotage. The predominant soil types found on the farm are Oakleaf and Tukulu.

The vineyards

Planted in 1985, the vineyards are grown in Tukulu soil on south-east facing slopes some 220m above sea level. The vines are grafted onto nematode-resistant rootstock Richter 99 and 110 and are trellised on a five-wire system.

The winemaking

The grapes were harvested by hand and machine at 24,5°C during the beginning of March. After destalking and crushing, the mash was fermented using a selected pure yeast culture in rotation tanks at 25 to 29°C. Fermentation took seven days to complete. After malolactic fermentation the wine was left on the lees and next matured in 300 litre barrels consisting of a combination of new French oak and second- and third-fill oak barrels for a period of 12 months.

Winemaker's comments

Colour: Dark ruby

Aroma: Strawberry with undertones of vanilla and caramel.

Palate: Full-bodied and velvety smooth with ripe, soft tannins.

Maturation potential: The wine is ready to drink now, but will mature for a further five years.

Food pairing

Excellent enjoyed on its own or served with barbecued meat, veal, poultry, pasta and red meat dishes.

Chemical analysis

Alcohol:	14.12 % by volume
Residual sugar:	3.20 g/l
Total acidity:	5.5 g/l
Total Sulphur:	84 mg/L
pH:	3.58
Total Extract:	36.4g/l