



Ernie Els 2012 Signature



RELEASE DATE	April 1 st , 2015
VARIETAL COMPOSITION	Cabernet Sauvignon 60% • Merlot 25% Petit Verdot 5% • Malbec 5% • Cabernet Franc 5%
APELLATION	Stellenbosch
VINEYARDS	Ernie Els Wines property
HARVEST	March & April, 2012. 25.5° Brix average sugar at harvest
TECHNICAL DATA	Alc. 14.76% By Vol. • R.S. 2.5g/l • T.A. 5.6g/l • pH 3.50
COOPERAGE	Aged for 20 months – 300 litre French Oak barrels (70% new)
PRODUCTION	3,260 x 6 x 750ml cases • 182 x 1.5L • 29 x 3L • 29 x 5L
SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE	I.P.W. (Integrated Production of Wine) Certified

TASTING NOTES

The 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon-led Bordeaux-style blend really shines in the epic 2012 Stellenbosch vintage. It shows an intensely purple rim and deep crimson core, leading to impressive concentration and startling depth. Rather closed at first, nuances of fig jam, cigar box and meat spice slowly arise from the glass, complemented by ripe red cherries and a hint of fine milk chocolate. The palate is supported by ultra-fine, layered tannins that are seemingly wrapped in mixed red berry fruits. Pure and elegant, the finish lingers with juicy cassis and a salty, mineral tail. This is not the most powerful of Ernie Els Signature's, but it perhaps holds the most impressive structure and will provide for long aging ahead. Enjoy now through to 2027+.

THE 2012 VINTAGE

The 2012 harvest is emerging as a particularly good one, both in terms of quality and volume. Although it's still early days, we do foresee that this vintage has the potential to be of a very high standard. After fairly stable climatic conditions throughout the second semester of 2011, a cold and wet spring slowed down activity in the vineyards. We experienced warm weather in late December which led to some vigorous foliage growth. The bunch counts revealed an above average figure so "green harvesting" was needed in January. (Green harvesting is the removal of immature grape bunches for the purpose of decreasing yield and thus maintaining intensity on the remaining fruit.) It's particularly pleasing to report that there was no apparent disease in the vineyards. Moderate to warm temperatures from the second half of February were prevalent as expected, but cool conditions throughout March slowed the ripening of the vines and assisted in improving phenolic ripeness of the grapes. There were some early rains during April but luckily 95% of the crop had already been harvested by this stage. In general, there is much excitement about the 2012 vintage, a specific characteristic being optimal ripeness levels achieved at lower sugars, thus in-turn resulting in lower alcohol levels.

ABOUT THE VINEYARD

All fruit was sourced from the Ernie Els Wines property whose vineyards grow on the warm north-facing slopes of the Helderberg region within the Stellenbosch appellation. The Hutton Clovelly soils contain a high gravel content which offers rich middle palate weight giving this wine exceptional depth and fruit purity. Each variety is separately managed to create unique and varied flavour profiles for this classic, 'Medoc-style', Bordeaux blend. With an altitude of approximately 250 metres above sea level together with the cooling influence of the Atlantic Ocean just 15 kilometres away, this extends the ripening period by up to 3 weeks resulting in lovely phenolic ripeness.

WINEMAKING

The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of early morning. On the sorting table, all excess stalks and inferior berries were carefully removed. Grape bunches were gently destalked with a Bucher de-stalker and lightly crushed. Fermentation took place in 7-ton, open-top stainless steel tanks with yeast WE 372 being added to the juice. The wines were pumped-over and punched-down manually 5 times per day ensuring maximum colour extraction from the skins. After primary fermentation the maceration period was 10 - 16 days before pressing. Each variety is matured separately (micro-vinified) in oak barrels before blending and eventual bottling.

