



RUST EN VREDE

STELLENBOSCH

- VINTAGE REPORT 2015 -

VINTAGE CYCLE: MAY 2014 – APRIL 2015



The 2015 vintage was characterized by challenging conditions that demanded constant adaptation and swift decision-making. A cold, early winter in 2014 provided an excellent start, with sufficient rainfall from April to July. However, a dry August set the tone for the growing season, leading to an early and even bud break, 2–3 weeks ahead of normal. Despite the dryness persisting into September, October, and November, the warm, calm spring weather contributed to slightly larger bunches (5%) and berries (3%), resulting in an average harvest volume, up 0.8% from the previous year.

Summer remained dry but cooler than usual, with significantly lower nighttime temperatures, which aided in colour development. The season's dryness presented unique challenges, forcing careful attention to vineyard variability and strategic decision-making, such as blending in the vineyard and prioritizing harvest based on sugar levels to make the most of the conditions.



Harvest began early, on February 11th, with only 15 days of picking, concluding on March 11th, marking the shortest and earliest vintage in two decades. A single scorching day on March 3rd added complexity, accelerating sugar levels. Subsequently, the wines from this vintage show elevated alcohol levels and a pronounced phenolic structure, with late-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon offering a unique, lighter profile that highlights the season's distinctive character.

Syrah and Merlot contributed to balancing the smaller Cabernet Sauvignon crop, resulting in wines with a more nuanced fruit profile that reflects the challenges of the vintage. Barrel management and blending will be critical to refining these wines. Fortunately, the vineyard's resilience and ongoing replanting efforts provide a strong foundation for crafting wines to mitigate 2015's challenges. Despite nearby fires in March, the minimal impact of smoke exposure ensured the integrity of the vintage.

