



RUST EN VREDE

STELLENBOSCH

- VINTAGE REPORT 2018 -

VINTAGE CYCLE: MAY 2017 – APRIL 2018



The 2018 vintage marked the fourth consecutive year of drought, with dry conditions and strict water restrictions shaping the season. Careful water management was critical, but the dry weather kept vines healthy and free from pests and diseases. Despite one of the smallest crops in over a decade, the wines show remarkable promise.

Winter arrived late, though May and June saw increased cold units compared to 2017. Daytime temperatures were warmer, and nights were cooler due to the drought. Stellenbosch received only 80% of the expected rainfall for the winter.

Above-average rain during flowering and berry set affected Cabernet Sauvignon, leading to uneven berries and bunches. High temperatures and thunderstorms mid-season spurred rapid shoot growth, requiring intensive canopy management.



The ripening period brought cooler nights, encouraging excellent colour and flavour development. December and January saw highs of 35°C, though the absence of heatwaves moderated the season. Smaller berries from the dry conditions further concentrated colour and flavour.

The ripening season was initially cool with some rain in February, so harvest began a bit later than usual. Cooler nights at the end of February meant longer hang time, allowing further flavour development. The weather warmed up over the ripening season, so the later batches of Cabernet Sauvignon came in quite quickly as sugars began to accumulate fast.

The dry season yielded healthy grapes with good intensity. Significant day-to-night temperature variation bolstered colour and flavour, resulting in well-balanced wines. Despite irrigation challenges and reduced yields, the 2018 vintage delivered exceptional quality, particularly in the Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, which shows great structure and fruit.

