



RUST EN VREDE

STELLENBOSCH

- VINTAGE REPORT 2019 -

VINTAGE CYCLE: MAY 2018 – APRIL 2019



The 2019 vintage was challenging, shaped by the legacy of a hot, dry July in 2018. These extreme conditions depleted reserves crucial for initial spring growth and adversely impacted bud break. Insufficient cold units during winter further hindered uniform bud break, setting a difficult tone for the season ahead.

August and September brought typical weather, but an intense October heatwave compounded the earlier stresses, leading to significantly reduced crop levels. Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah yields were down by over 20%. While the remainder of the growing season was more moderate, the vines began to struggle with ripening as the season progressed.



Harvest began on February 18 at Rust en Vrede with Merlot. Cooler days and nights slowed sugar accumulation while phenolics continued to develop, resulting in an unusual alignment of phenolic ripeness at lower sugar levels. The season required careful attention to total acidity and pH, which shifted as ripening progressed. Picking decisions were heavily influenced by fruit development rather than sugar or phenolics alone, with later-ripening fruit benefiting from additional hang time.

The harvest concluded with Cabernet Sauvignon on April 10. As cooler weather and rain set in, the risk of further delay outweighed the potential gains, bringing a complex end to the season.

This vintage demanded meticulous monitoring, with soil moisture, vine stress, and berry development under constant observation. More targeted sampling from specific vineyard blocks, reminiscent of the approach taken in 2016, proved invaluable in navigating the season's complexities. Despite the challenges, the vintage reflects the dedication and precision required to craft wines of distinction under testing conditions.

