RUST EN VREDE ESTATE 1694

RUST EN VREDE
STELLENBOSCH

- VINTAGE REPORT 2026 -

VINTAGE CYCLE: MAY 2025 – APRIL 2026

The 2026 growing season demanded careful attention and decisive vineyard management, ultimately rewarding us with fruit of exceptional quality. A long, dry spring and summer, coupled with persistent winds, kept disease pressure low and allowed for precise vineyard control. Timely irrigation and early canopy interventions ensured even ripening, while Cabernet Sauvignon produced small berries and well-filled bunches, promising excellent colour and concentration.

March brought an intense heatwave, with three consecutive days exceeding 40°C. The accelerated ripening compressed the harvest into a remarkably short period, with picking taking place between 10 and 26 March. Despite the challenging conditions, fruit arrived at the cellar healthy and in excellent condition, allowing the team to harvest each block at optimal balance.

Across the Estate, the grapes displayed deep colour, strong phenolic development and even ripeness. The season's warmth contributed to concentration without sacrificing freshness or elegance. Particularly noteworthy was Block 17, the new source of our Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. Its heavier, moisture-retentive soils helped moderate the effects of the heat, producing high quality fruit and paving the way for the wine's return to the range.

Yields were in line with the long-term average at Rust en Vrede, while increasing production from newly established vineyards lifted overall tonnage. Fruit from these younger blocks shows considerable promise, offering confidence for the future.

Although the season was characterised by warmer-than-average temperatures, lower cumulative rainfall and reduced dam levels across the Western Cape, diligent vineyard management and our established sites ensured a successful outcome. The 2026 vintage stands out for its concentration, colour and purity, and promises wines of depth, structure and longevity.