

Pilgrim Wines Shiraz 2021

Vineyard Information:

Perched on top of a Northeastern sloping hill, nestled between other isolated patches of hard-to-find vines, these vines enjoy prime views over Stellenbosch and its rolling hills toward Cape Town.

Manicured, and especially nurtured; kept isolated so as to keep them safe from encroaching leaf roll virus originating from neighboring farmlands, these vines produce amazing fruit. On the slopes of Stellenbosch Mountain – a landmark that epitomizes quality – its roots run deep into the decomposed red/brown granitic soils of origin.

Hand-picked grapes from specific clones of Shiraz lots include the internationally awarded clone SH7C as well as local fan favourite SH470

Harvest Report:

Like the previous year, 2021 was also earlier ripening than expected, added the fact that these Stellenbosch vines are all dryland, there was never a doubt that it would be an early vintage for Shiraz.

While the rains in winter of 2020 were good, it was also later, and filled ground levels till later in the year, giving a result of lower soils temperatures and delayed budburst in Spring of 2020

With a few less growing-, or ripening days under the belt, the Shiraz came in perfectly ripe at 23.5 balling, together with a fantastic natural acidity!

Harvesting started on the 26th of February 2021, all by hand. The grapes were transported in fruit bins to the Pilgrim cellar for vinification.

Winemaking Practices:

From the start, my intention to work with Shiraz was to produce the perfect in-between wine – a goldilocks wine. There are in general 2 polar styles to Shiraz/Syrah in South Africa (hence the use of the 2 different varietal names depicting the style in which it is produced).

One is the more traditional South African big and juicy fruit. The other style is one where the younger generation winemakers were so adamant to move away from the “old” style, that they went the polar antithesis to what has been the staple for so long (and good for them all to try and buck the trend)

That is what sparked my interest in perusing that “golden mean” wine - purely because the styles are currently so far removed - there should surely be one!

So looking for that perfect balance for me, means looking for perfectly ripe fresh fruit backed with peppery, stalky spice. I am looking for subtle fine tannins but balanced by perfectly tuned finesse.

To do this, I use a very specific amount of oxygen during fermentation, coupled with very precise levels of extraction, as well as a certain amount of whole bunch fermentation. For the 2020 vintage I used 15% whole bunch fermentation.

Maturation lasted 18 months in 50% neutral 300L barrels, and 50% third fill 228L barrels with American heads.

Please be aware that this wine is made in the most unobtrusive way I could imagine to do. There will be some degree of sediment or crystal formation which is totally natural in these styles of wines.

Analysis:

Alc: 13.5% pH: 3.45 TA: 5.9 g/l VA: 0.69 g/l RS: 1.80 g/l