

`Chakalaka` Swartland 2015

Swartland, Coastal Region, South Africa



Grape Varieties	46% Syrah/Shiraz
	15% Carignano/Carignan
	13% Mourvèdre
	10% Tannat
	8% Petite Sirah
	8% Grenache/Garnacha

Winemaker	Charl du Plessis
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	14%
Residual Sugar	3.4g/L
Acidity	6.5g/L
Wine pH	3.34
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Sustainable, Vegetarian, Vegan

PRODUCER

Charles Back was a pioneer in the Swartland when he started Spice Route in 1998. "Without [Charles]...the Swartland would still be regarded as a rural backwater" wrote Tim Atkin. Today, the region is the source of many of South Africa's outstanding wines, yet Spice Route remains one of the best and most credible producers in the region, due largely to the fact that they own their own vineyards. Spice Route's 100 hectares of vineyards are situated in Malmesbury and Darling. The former, all bush trained on Malmesbury shale and red clay subsoils (the clay ensures the vineyards are dry grown), give the Grenache and Mourvèdre the intensity of fruit that makes this region so exciting. Winemaker Charl du Plessis has been with Charles for 15 years, and knows the region intimately. The winemaking is 'hands off', as Charl is keen to capture the flavours and structure of the outstanding fruit he has grown.

VINEYARDS

Chakalaka is Spice Route's signature wine. It is a blend of six different grape varieties. The vineyards are planted on Richter 99 rootstock and are mainly bushvine planted on deep iron-rich clay soils, farmed without irrigation. The varieties Mourvèdre, Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, Petite Sirah and Tannat were selected for their suitability to the Swartland growing conditions. The name is derived from a spicy South African relish which is similarly a fusion of different flavours.

VINTAGE

The 2015 harvest had the earliest start in decades. A very wet winter season in 2014 followed by early, warm weather in August resulted in earlier bud burst. A warm, dry and windy summer kept vineyard growth under control and accelerated ripening by approximately two weeks. Smaller berries and cool temperatures during the harvest season in the Swartland region led to a concentration of flavour and colour, which holds great promise in terms of quality.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were hand harvested, destalked and lightly crushed and then fermented in open concrete fermenters ('kuipe'). Manual punching down took place during fermentation. The wines were then racked off and sent to barrels for malolactic fermentation and further ageing. Each wine component for the blend was matured in seasoned French and American oak for 12 months before blending occurred.

TASTING NOTES

This wine is deep ruby red in colour. Aromas of clove and subtle white pepper followed by plum with hints of elegant spice. A luscious and rich palate followed by smooth, integrated oak and well-balanced tannins.

AWARDS

International Wine Challenge 2019, Silver
Sommelier Wine Awards 2018, Silver