

Spice Route,  
**Swarthland Mourvèdre 2021**  
Swarthland, Coastal Region, South Africa

*Spice Route*



Grape Varieties	<b>100% Mourvèdre</b>
Winemaker	<b>Charl du Plessis</b>
Closure	<b>Natural Cork</b>
ABV	<b>13.5%</b>
Residual Sugar	<b>3g/L</b>
Acidity	<b>5.6g/L</b>
Wine pH	<b>3.44</b>
Bottle Sizes	<b>75cl</b>
Notes	<b>Vegetarian, Practising Organic, Vegan</b>

## PRODUCER

Charles Back was a pioneer in the Swarthland when he started Spice Route in 1998. "Without [Charles]...the Swarthland 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

Mourvèdre is producing some of the most exciting wines in the Swarthland. The grapes were harvested from unirrigated bushvines, which were originally planted in 2001 on deep Koffieklip and Oakleaf soils. The average yield was 3.5 tons per hectare.

## VINTAGE

Following three years of drought, the 2021 vintage can be seen as a 'cooler' vintage. 91mm of rain fell between September to November 2020. This began to replenish the soil's water reserves and had a positive impact on the quality of the vintage, though yields remained low. Harvest was later than average and resulted in even ripening of concentrated berries.

## VINIFICATION

Grapes were hand harvested, destemmed and lightly crushed into open concrete fermenters. Manual punch downs were performed three times a day during fermentation. Fermentation lasted seven days, after which the wine was pressed off the skins and racked to barrel. The wine was matured in barrel for a period of 16 months using a combination of French and American oak. A small percentage of the wine was matured in Qvevris, which enhanced the mouthfeel and complexity of the wine.

## TASTING NOTES

Dense and intense, with opulent aromas of black cherry, raspberry, cardamom and wild herbs. The palate is brimming with juicy black and red fruit flavours, tempered by a subtle savoury edge. It is medium bodied, with ripe tannins and well-integrated oak.