

Spice Route,
Swarthland Grenache 2023
Swarthland, Coastal Region, South Africa

Spice Route



Grape Varieties	100% Grenache
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	13.5%
Residual Sugar	2.1g/L
Acidity	5.7g/L
Wine pH	3.47
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Vegetarian, Vegan, Practising Organic

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

Planted in 2006, these unirrigated bush vines from Amoskuil farm have started to show promising results, with the potential to produce complex wines. Even the antelope that roam wild on the farm have a particular preference for this vineyard, often nibbling on the low-hanging bush vine fruit.

VINTAGE

2023 was a cool and moderate vintage, allowing for the grapes to be harvested about two weeks earlier than in previous years. The balanced weather conditions throughout the year produced grapes with strong purity of fruit, a strong indicator of the variety's potential success in this region.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were hand harvested before being fermented in open concrete vessels, with regular manual punch-downs. The must is gently pressed off the skins and then transferred to old French oak barrels for malolactic fermentation, to maintain the delicate fruit character. The wine was further matured for 16 months in the same barrel before it was bottled.

TASTING NOTES

A vibrant and expressive Grenache with aromas of red cherry, raspberry, and wild strawberry, layered with hints of white pepper, dried herbs, and subtle baking spice. The palate is bright and juicy, showing supple tannins and a fresh, energetic core of red fruit. The finish is pure, lifted, and gently spiced.