

Restless River,

## `Ava Marie` Hemel-en-Aarde Chardonnay 2023

Walker Bay, Hemel-en Aarde, Cape South Coast, South Africa



|                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Grape Varieties | <b>100% Chardonnay</b>                |
| Winemaker       | <b>Craig Wessels</b>                  |
| Closure         | <b>Diam</b>                           |
| ABV             | <b>13%</b>                            |
| Residual Sugar  | <b>1.7g/L</b>                         |
| Acidity         | <b>6.8g/L</b>                         |
| Wine pH         | <b>3.33</b>                           |
| Bottle Sizes    | <b>75cl</b>                           |
| Notes           | <b>Sustainable, Vegetarian, Vegan</b> |

### PRODUCER

Beginning as a hobby for self-taught winemaker, Craig Wessels, Restless River is now a world-renowned producer of cool climate Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay described by Neal Martin as having “real Burgundian allure”. In 2004, Craig and his wife Anne, bought a run-down sheep farm in the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, with a view to raise their family away from the city. By chance, the farm was also home to the area’s oldest Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon vines, planted in 1998. Craig began making wine in a small, converted garage on the estate. In 2012 the Restless River wines were officially launched and have continued to impress ever since.

### VINEYARDS

The Restless River estate is located in the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. Here, proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, coastal breezes, regular cloud cover and high elevations, result in some of South Africa’s coolest daytime temperatures. Fruit for the ‘Ava Marie’ Chardonnay is sourced from the eponymous single vineyard. The vines are planted on the north and south-facing mid slopes at 270 metres above sea level. The rocky soils are decomposed granite over clay, which lends precision and texture. The two-hectare site is the oldest Chardonnay vineyard in the region, planted in 1999. The vines are cordon trained, dry-farmed and managed sustainably.

### VINTAGE

2023 was a winegrower’s vintage, beginning with a warm and dry start to the season and early bud break, followed by cooler and wetter conditions in mid-December. This extended ripening and careful viticultural methods were required to ensure fruit quality remained high. Early-ripening varieties were not impacted by the February rains, and the resulting wines were focused with generous characteristics.

### VINIFICATION

The hand-harvested Chardonnay was gently whole bunch pressed with an old Vasin basket press. The juice was left to settle without any additives and was kept at a consistent temperature. Spontaneous fermentation took place in 500L French oak barrels and matured on its lees for 12 months in barrel (10%), and a small proportion in unlined Tuscan terracotta amphora, ensuring a rich texture. The wine was left to settle in stainless steel tanks for six months prior to bottling, followed by 18 months of bottle ageing before release.

### TASTING NOTES

Notes of oatmeal and struck match balance with lemongrass and lime on the nose. The palate is textured with a long finish with a refreshing, saline note.