

Limited edition, one-off De Toren Decade

The winemaking team at De Toren are celebrating their 10th vintage of De Toren Z, a Merlot-dominated Bordeaux blend, all five varieties of which are grown on a gentle slope facing onto False Bay in the Stellenbosch wine-growing region.



The wine stems from the same originators of the Fusion V and is vinified in the De Toren Private Cellar under the same guidance as Fusion V. The critical difference is that Fusion V is a Left Bank-inspired blend that evolves through several stages of critical tasting panels, whereby 'Z' is exclusively a Right Bank-inspired, Terroir-driven wine. This scientifically based project was originally labelled 'Project Z', due to the extreme nature of the research and planning, however became affectionately adopted for the brand over time, hence - De Toren Z.

The team set out to capture the influence of nature's elements by aligning rootstocks and cultivars to identified soil parcels on a chosen single vineyard and planting an array of clones over five varieties to grow a great Merlot-dominated wine. The make-up of the block comprises: Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot.

The vines of 'Project Z' are predominantly south facing and consequently cooler than their north-facing counterparts, while also benefitting from the prevailing south-east sea breezes generated off False Bay. The row direction has also been specifically planted in a NE to SW orientation as opposed to the normal N to S or E to W, to channel the cooling coastal breezes up each entire row, thereby producing a critically longer ripening period.

Hand sorting

Ripeness and quality are monitored by state-of-the-art infra-red aerial imaging, which allows the separate micro-vinification of clusters of grapes from the same block. Hand sorting is also practised to ensure that only the best berries are selected, no grape skins are ever broken and no wine is ever pumped. Each berry that arrives at the cellar door is scrutinised through three different sorting phases from the field to the cellar, with the final stage personally enforced by the philosophy of owner Emil den Dulk: "If you wouldn't eat it, toss it."

The cellar is a 100% gravity driven design, with its unique tower - hence 'De Toren'. Pumps are considered 'elements of torture' and the absence thereof ensures that De Toren can live out the mantra of softly, softly, gently - as this is the way De Toren treats its grapes and, ultimately, the finished wine.

In celebration of the landmark 10th vintage, the team have bottled a 100% Merlot from this special single vineyard and have called it the De Toren Decade.

Only 1760 individually numbered bottles of this once-off wine have been produced and will sell via the mailing list for R400 per bottle.

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