



[< Back](#)

## DE TRAFFORD MERLOT 2004

### VINEYARD BLOCKS

1 block 16 year old vines on 7 wire vertical trellis with moveable foliage wires. Clone MO 192 on 101 - 14 rootstock. On low lying Helderberg mountain site. Poor gravelly clay soil.

Yield 6 tons / hect. (39hl/ha).

2nd block 10 year old vines on 7 wire vertical trellis with moveable foliage wires. Mix of "new clones" on R110 & R99 rootstocks. 'Mont Fleur' vineyard - high altitude mountain slope. Soil deep red Hutton. Yield 7 tons / hect. (46hl/ha).

3% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot included.

### VINTAGE CONDITIONS

The spring was cool and late with good, even budburst. We had a few very hot days in early January, but generally the ripening season was relatively cool and dry and nearly 2 weeks later than usual. A light irrigation at veraison ensured the grapes ripened without too much stress. An unusual phenomenon in 2004 was the occurrence of some unripe berries within some of the bunches, which we had to painstakingly remove prior to crushing.

Harvest date : 21 / 2 / 04 – 18 / 3 / 04 @ 23 – 24.6° balling.

### PRODUCTION

Handpicking into 20 kg lugboxes. Destemming and gentle crushing directly into small 2 ton open top fermentation tanks. Spontaneous natural yeast fermentation @ max. 30 deg. with the cap of skins punched down manually 1-3 times a day for 11 days. Wine drained directly to barrels together with single pressing from traditional basket press.

All our red wines undergo malolactic fermentation in the barrel. 35% new French oak was used from high quality coopers. Time in barrel 19 months, which included several rackings to gradually clarify the wine and assist maturation.

The wine was lightly fined (with 2 fresh egg whites per barrel) and bottled unfiltered by hand on the property. Bottling date : 18/10/05. Production : 870 cases.

### TASTING NOTES

Deep true red colour. Bright red berry and cherry fruit with beguiling subtle earthiness, nuts and spices. Youthful focused fruit on the palate with plenty of fine tannins on the mid palate and a classic long, dry finish. Probably best between 2008 and 2014. Ideal with rich and creamy pasta dishes and various meat dishes.

### ANALYSIS

Alc. 14.47 SG. 2.0 TA 5.2 pH 3.57 VA 0.46 SO2 29 free 76 total

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PH / FAX +27 21 880 1611 | [info@detrafford.co.za](mailto:info@detrafford.co.za) | PO Box 495, Stellenbosch 7599

[to top ^](#)