



HAMILTON RUSSELL VINEYARDS

HEMEL-EN-AARDE, SOUTH AFRICA - HAMILTON RUSSELL

2015 was an extraordinary vintage - unlike anything we have experienced before. It started a full 2 weeks early and finished over a period of 4 weeks (on February 20th) instead of our customary 7 weeks.

The grapes were extremely healthy with thick skins and an unusually low juice content and the resulting wines are fuller and more sumptuous and concentrated than the 2013's and 2014's. Full ripeness was achieved surprisingly quickly and this happened despite the average maximum temperatures for the crucial months of Dec, Jan, Feb and Mar being lower at 24.95 Centigrade than our long term average of 25 Centigrade. This makes 2015 cooler than the celebrated 2013, 2012 and 2009.

Another previously unexperienced feature of 2015 was the very high yeast conversion rates of grape sugars to alcohol. This was an industry wide feature and 2015's, to be phenolically ripe, needed higher alcohol levels. A much drier and slightly warmer Spring than than usual, in part accounts for the early harvest, combined with a drier and slightly warmer than average January. The harvest period had just over half of the average rainfall for the period. Greater sunlight intensity in the build-up to harvest also sped things up.

2015 was the first organic harvest (with some biodynamic features) for us and we have been thrilled with the results in our wines. We simply feel much better about what we do and we have been brought even closer to our all important vineyards. A logistically challenging but excellent vintage.

