

Thistle & Weed

2023

'NASTERGAL'

Red Blend | *Western Cape - South Africa*

VEGAN

Stats

Grapes: 84% Tempranillo - 14% Souzão - 2% Alicante Bouschet
Vineyard: Wellington (Tempranillo & part of Alicante Bouschet) - Stellenbosch (all other grapes)
Vine Age: Average: 21-years-old
Soil Type: Shale and schist (Wellington) - Shale and granite (Stellenbosch)
Viticulture: Conventional
Fermentation: Native – open-top fermenters
Aging: 24 months in used 225L French oak barrels
Alcohol: 14.5%
pH: 3.6
Total Acidity: 5.28 g/L
Total SO2: 45 ppm
Total Production: 108 cases
UPC: 700083698841

Reviews

The WineMag | 92 points

About

Night falls and black nightshade (aka Nastergal) blooms, its berries ripen to inky black. Nastergal is a blend primarily made up of Tempranillo sourced from Wellington, which is a revered variety originating from the Iberian Peninsula. This grape provides backbone and matches well with the rustic Alicante Bouschet. Alicante is a teinturier variety meaning it has red flesh as well as red skin unlike most red varieties which only have red skin, translating to an inky blackness. It is this unique characteristic of Alicante that inspired the wine to be named Nastergal (Black Nightshade) reminiscent of the dark berries of this common weed. Following the theme of the past few vintages, the 2022 is primarily Tempranillo and Alicante-Bouschet, with a touch of Portuguese varieties: Touriga Franca, Souza, Pontac, Tinta Francisca, and Touriga Naçional. These grapes are revered in the viticulture community for being well adapted to warmer climates, and thus, they would fare well in the face of climate change.

The winemaking is kept modest and straightforward to allow the combination of cultivars and site to express itself. The grapes were sorted, de-stemmed but not crushed, and fermented separately and without any additions in open top fermenters. Routine punchdowns brought a gentle extraction of color and tannin. The grapes were gently pressed after 10 days on skins and drained to barrel for malolactic fermentation. The grapes matured separately in mainly old 225L French oak barrels for 9 months before blending. The wine was bottled without fining and with a gentle sheet filtration and a small addition of sulfur dioxide.

Tasting Note

Nastergal is inspired by the deeply colored red cultivars grown in the Douro valley of Portugal. Deep and inky, with aromas of blueberry, violet, dried sage, and a hint of black peppercorn. The palate is rich and inviting, full of dark fruit flavors and grippy tannins.