



Thistle & Weed

2021

'NASTERGAL'

Red Blend | Western Cape - South Africa



VEGAN

Stats

Grapes: 38% Tempranillo - 34% Alicante Bouschet - 15% Touriga Franca - 6% Souzao - 5% Pontac - 1% Tinta Francisca - 1% Touriga Naçional

Vineyard: Wellington (Tempranillo & part of Alicante Bouschet) - Stellenbosch (all other grapes)

Vine Age: Average: 20-years-old

Soil Type: Shale and schist (Wellington) - Shale and granite (Stellenbosch)

Viticulture: Conventional

Fermentation: Inoculated - one-ton open-top stainless-steel (10% whole bunch)

Skin Contact: 10 days

Aging: 12 months in old 225L and 300L French oak

Alcohol: 14%

pH: 3.59

Total Acidity: 5.5 g/L

Total SO₂: 109 ppm

Total Production: 167 cases

UPC: 700083698841

Reviews

Platter's Guide | 92 points

Tim Atkin, MW | 93 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 in 2020, the 2021 vintage 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, fermented separately and without any additions in open top fermenters. About 10% of the grapes were kept as whole bunches. 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 and 300L French oak barrels for 12 months before blending. It was bottled without fining and with a gentle sheet filtration and a small addition of sulfur dioxide.

Tasting Note

Inky black with aromas of vibrant plum, blueberries, tumbleweed, and black pepper on the nose. The palate is moreish, brimming with berry flavors and robust tannins. This could age for several years to come.