



## Décolletage Red 2013

**Vintage:** 2013

**Varietals:** Merlot (Elgin) 48%; Cabernet Franc (Stanford/Walker Bay) 28%; Cabernet Sauvignon (Elgin) 24%. Thus 72% Elgin and 28% Walker Bay.

**Description:** This is a complex, juicy, full bodied red wine. It has a heady nose of deep cassis, violets and smoky cigars. On the palate there are intense black berry flavours laced with dark chocolate, plum, along with hints of perfumed white pepper.

This wine pairs well with saucy lamb shanks; steak-frites and big roaring winter fires! It has an excellent aging potential of 5-8 years

**General:** These grapes were sourced from two different farms. The Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon were harvested from a farm called Valley Green, in Elgin. The Cabernet Franc was from Sir Robert Stanford's farm in Stanford, Walker Bay region. Each varietal was harvested on separate dates. 2013 was quite a late harvest. These grapes were harvested at the end of March, and in mid April. This meant that they ripened slowly in their cool climate, allowing for good concentrated flavours along with well balanced acidity to match the sugars. The grapes were fermented and then aged separately. They were blended just before bottling.

**Vinification:** All three varietals were treated in a similar way. After sorting and processing the grapes into large open fermentation bins, they were left to have a cold soak for 5 days, before spontaneous fermentation started. Many of the berries were still whole, which allowed for a component of the wine to undergo carbonic maceration, where fermentation occurs within the uncrushed berry, within a high concentration of its' own Co<sub>2</sub>. Each bin has 500kg of grapes.

The first of the grapes to be harvested was the Merlot, which served as the greatest component of this blend. It was picked at 23.3 degrees balling, on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013. We bought 1500kg. After the 5 day soak, the Merlot started fermenting vigorously, and it was tasting and smelling really good. So I took the risk not to add any yeast, and allowed a wild fermentation to take place. When the sugars had dropped down to 5 degrees balling, I hand bucketed the wine into a tank, fitted with drains, to make space for the Cabernet Sauvignon and also to prevent it from oxidizing as the fermentation slowed. Once the skins were pressed, I put the wine into 4x225l French oak barrels. They were a mixture of 2<sup>nd</sup>; 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> fill barrels.

The second harvest was Cabernet Franc, picked on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013, 25 degrees balling, at Sir Robert Stanford in Stanford. We were given less than we had ordered, and thus only had 850kg. This wine went through the same soaking process, but the fermentation was slightly sluggish, so I added vin116 yeast to ensure a safe fermentation. We managed to get 1x300l French oak and 1x225l French Oak barrel. They were second and third fill barrels.

The third harvest was the Cabernet Sauvignon, also from Valley Green farm, but on the opposite side of the Elgin Valley to the Merlot. These grapes were picked on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013. We bought 1660kg. It went through the same 5 day soaking process, and I then added Vin116 yeast to ensure a safe fermentation. By this stage the weather had begun to change considerably, which is risky for stuck fermentations, thus the choice of relatively virulent and temperature resistant yeast, such as Vin 116. After the fermentation and subsequent pressing, we managed to fill 2x225l French Oak barrels. One was second fill and the other was third fill.

These barrels were all left to mature for 32 months! After much tasting, testing and blending, they were finally ready for bottling in December 2015.

**Wine Analysis:**      Alcohol - 14.5  
                             Residual Sugar - 3.44  
                             PH - 3.52  
                             Total Acid - 6.12  
                             Maturation - 5-8 years