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# Ernie Els Big Easy 2021

CSPC# 755116

12x750ml

13.87% alc./vol.

**Chemical Analysis** Acidity 5.7 g/l pH: 3.67 Residual Sugar 2.0 g/l  
**Grape Variety** 60% Shiraz, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Mourvèdre, 6% Viognier, 5% Grenache, 4% Cinsault.

**Region** Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Winemaker** Louis Strydom

**Vintage** After a somewhat shorter summer, autumn arrived quickly and the subsequent days during harvest were cooler than usual, making the harvest period much longer. Together with other South African producers, they had to pause harvesting to allow for a few days of heavy rainfall to pass before harvest could be resumed again. Winemaker Louis Strydom has described this harvest season as 'a vintage with two halves' as it felt like two separate harvest periods. *'80mm of rainfall on the 10th and 11th March brought the harvest to a screeching halt for two weeks. However, we were able to proceed once the weather had settled and we are happy with what we are tasting in the cellar.'*

2021 will be memorable to Ernie Els as it is the first season in their new cellar. They are experimenting with different techniques this year by making use of amphorae and concrete tanks, which will give a slower, more even fermentation.

**Vineyards** The Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvèdre, Grenache, Cinsault and Viognier were sourced from selected vineyard parcels on the Helderberg Mountain within the Stellenbosch appellation. The typical soils found on the Helderberg provide a rich middle-palate weight, giving the wine exceptional depth and fruit purity. With an altitude of approximately 250 metres above sea level together with the cooling influence of the Atlantic Ocean just 15 kilometres away, this extends the ripening period by up to 3 weeks resulting in lovely phenolic ripeness.

**Harvest** The grapes were harvested in the early hours of the morning when temperatures are coolest, before destalking and optical sorting took place. Harvest season began on 16th February 2021 at Ernie Els, a little later than they had initially anticipated. Summer was relatively short and cooler than usual, not necessarily a negative factor for grape growing.

**Vinification/** The Shiraz component was partially whole bunch fermented to aid with flavour complexity. The remaining whole berries were then fermented in open top tanks and terracotta amphorae, where regular pump-overs or punch-downs were performed to maintain a harmonious balance between colour, flavour, and tannin extraction from the skins. Throughout the fermentation process, close attention was paid to ensure that the natural aromas and flavours were preserved and accentuated as necessary. Following the primary fermentation stage, some vessels underwent extended maceration. Each variety was aged independently in oak barrels or amphorae, a process known as micro-vinification, before blending and bottling took place.

**Maturation** Cooperage: Aged for 14 months in older oak barrels – 80% in 300 litre French Oak barrels and 20% in 300 litre American Oak barrels

**Tasting Notes** Ruby with a plum core. Lifted, joyful floral aromas; hibiscus and potpourri, then an undercurrent of Crème de Cassis; red berries and blueberries sprinkled with white pepper spice. There are fresh herbs too, bay leaf and sage taper into the scent of fresh rain. Shiraz-led the spice and silk of the cultivar unwinds into opulent tones on the palate of clove-studded plum pudding, lashings of wild purple berries along a structured backbone of cabernet. Super juicy and charged. Paper-fine tannins brush alongside a lemony, springy acidity to the finish, which is equal parts bright and appetisingly dry. Superb drinkability without sacrificing concentration.

**Serve with** Grilled beef medallions in a peppercorn sauce

**Cellaring** Delicious now, it will swing easy for another 5-6 years.

**Scores/Awards** **4 stars / 87 points** - Meryl Weaver, *Platter's South African Wine Guide 2024*  
**Silver Medal / 90 points** - Decanter World Wine Awards 2023

**Reviews** *"Similar dapper blend in 2021, mostly shiraz & cab (60/19) with 4 others. Supple structure, mostly older oak, aptly reflects the range description: 'delivering full flavour but gentle approachability'.*  
- MW, *Platters Wine Guide*

